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## CHAPTER 1

### COURTIERS AND CRAFTS MEN ...

#### THE SOCIAL AND MANUSCRIPT CONTEXT OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY LYRIC

A courtier needs to understand the making of poetry, 'that  
being now lately become a courtier he shew not himself  
a crafts man, & merit to be disgraded, and with scorne sent  
back againe to the shop, or other place of his facultie  
and calling.

(George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesie*, ed. G. D.  
Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge  
University Press, 1936), p. 158)

On 6 January 1400, at a time when France was briefly at peace in the hurly-burly of the Hundred Years' War, two of her greatest dignitaries, Philip the Bold duke of Burgundy and Louis duke of Bourbon, asked the permission of King Charles VI to institute a *Cour amoureuse*. It will, they say, act as a distraction: 'en ceste desplaisant et contraire pestilence de epidimie presentement courant ... pour passer partie de

temps plus gracieusement'.<sup>1</sup> What they envisage is an institution which will inculcate the virtues of humility and loyalty, and foster 'l'honneur, loenge, recommandacion et service de toutes dames et damoiselles' (ibid.). To prosecute these laudable aims, they have appointed a certain Pierre de Hauteville,<sup>2</sup> attached to the Burgundian court, as *Prince du Bailliage d'Amours*: flattered but dutiful, he has applied himself to drawing up a Charter – a Charter which survives in just one manuscript,<sup>3</sup> and which happens to crystallize a number of the issues which will preoccupy me in this chapter.

Those who are to make up the membership of the *Cour amoureuse* are an interestingly hybrid bunch, arranged in rigid hierarchies and with carefully prescribed titles and roles and duties. They are, on the one hand, members of the highest nobility: not just the dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon, but among others the counts of Hainaut and Saint-Pol, the sons of the duke of Bavaria and the King of Navarre, Boucicaut Marshal of France, the lords of La Rochefoucauld, Wavrin and Montmorency. On the other, there are also the bourgeois: some of the more notable intellectual humanists of the early 1400s, men like Jean de Montreuil and Pierre and Gontier Col, for instance;<sup>4</sup> well-known writers and poets like Eustache Deschamps and Antoine de La Salle; more surprisingly, perhaps, to us, a string of *secrétaires*, civil servants as it were, from the royal and ducal chancelleries, most of whom are to hold administrative positions in the

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<sup>1</sup> *La Cour amoureuse dite de Charles VI*, ed. by Carla Bozzolo and Hélène Loyau, (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1982), p. 36; references henceforward in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Himself a poet, of *La Confession et testament de l'amant trespasé de deuil*, ed. by Rose M. Bidler (Montreal: CERES, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> See Arthur Piaget, 'La Cour amoureuse, dite de Charles VI', *Romania* 20 (1891), 417-54, and more fully Bozzolo and Loyau, *La Cour amoureuse*, ed. by Bozzolo and Loyau.

<sup>4</sup> All three of whom were participants in the *Débat sur le Roman de la Rose*, ed. by Eric Hicks (Paris: H. Champion, 1977).

*Cour amoureuse* as *Auditeurs*, and *Tresoriers*, and *Secretaires et concierges*<sup>5</sup> (p. 38).

All of the participants are to commit themselves to a complex yearly timetable: there are to be great gatherings on the first Sunday of every month, at some unspecified date in May, on Valentine's Day, and on the Feasts of the Virgin Mary (Conception, Assumption ...). Each reunion will open with a Mass and close with a feast, and will be devoted to what Pierre de Hauteville calls a *puy*: the term which, in the north of France, Rouen, Dieppe, Lille, Valenciennes, designates a gathering, though one less aristocratic than the *Cour amoureuse*, to celebrate poetry and performance in all its forms.<sup>6</sup> Pierre specifies, carefully, in what will consist the activities of each monthly *puy*: each in turn of the twenty-four appointed *ministres*, who are all to possess 'experte congnoissance en la science de rethorique' (p. 36), will 'baillier ... refrain a sa plaisance' (ibid.), and each member of the assembled company is to compose a ballade to that refrain. The ballades are to be performed publicly, before the *cour*, either by the poet or by his nominee ('lire ou faire lire'; p. 40), and submitted to the ladies as adjudicators (it is important therefore to ensure that the latter are possessed of *noble avis* and *bonne discrecion*; ibid.); they, the ladies, will weigh the entries against each other, alert to 'vice de fausse rime, reditte trop longue ou trop courte ligne' (ibid.), and award prizes whose value is scrupulously prescribed, a silver crown to the best of the poets, a silver chaplet to the runner-up – and both the winning

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<sup>5</sup> By which latter term is meant something like 'bodyguard': a highly prestigious appointment (see Godefroy, II, p. 219).

<sup>6</sup> On which see Gérard Gros, *Le Poète, la vierge et le prince du puy. Etude sur les Puys marials de la France du Nord du XIVe siècle à la Renaissance* (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 1992).

poems will be *enregistrees en noz amoureux registres* (ibid.).<sup>7</sup> On other occasions, on the feasts of the Virgin, the participants are to compose ‘serventois de cinq couples a la loenge et selon la feste d’icelle tres glorieuse Vierge’ (ibid.) – some of them may well have been relieved to discover that if they could not manage such a thing, they might nevertheless present a *chançon amoureuse* previously composed and performed elsewhere. Once the *serventois* have been presented, the leaves of paper or parchment are to be slipped into an elegant silk pouch (‘une grande bourse de soye’; ibid.) to await adjudication – after which the winning entries are also to be carefully copied into the *registres*.<sup>8</sup> Meticulous arrangements are to be put in place to preserve these records, which also include lists of members complete with their blazons:

Sera cy après ordonné et avisé en quelle abbeye ou autre lieu de ce royaume seront mis en garde les registres des armes, les papiers des balades et autres fais de rethorique, sy tost que plains seront d’escripture, pour les monstrier en temps a venir, quant il plaira a ceulz qui le requerront et vaurront. (p. 38)

For completeness, other diversions were planned as part of these gatherings. There might, for instance, be jousting, or there might be debates, *amoureux procès pour différentes opinions soustenir* (p. 41): Pierre de Hauteville clearly finds the latter prospect particularly alluring and makes detailed and lavish arrangements whereby the proposer will indict his motion in the *registres* in one colour, the opponent in another – they may not use black, but may choose ‘couleurs de vermeil, vert, bleu, sanguine,

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7 The salaries of the copyists are also carefully prescribed – ‘.l. blanc pour chascunne balade enregistrer’ (p. 36) – and the *Cour* is to supply the expensive stationery: ‘paierons et donrons du nostre tous les papiers appartenans et neccessaires pour icelles balades enregistrer’ (p. 37).

8 Participants were expected to compose verses in metres of all sorts: ‘dittiers, complaintes, rondeaux, virelays, lays ou autres quelconques façon et taille de rethorique, rimee ou en prose’ (p. 42), always provided, of course, that none of them dishonours the ladies.

violet et pourpre' (ibid.).<sup>9</sup> Pierre obviously fears that the debaters may be unbecomingly prolix, and takes careful precautions: the proposition and the opposition must each be sensibly brief, not more than 'XII. articles et en chascun article plus de .XII. lignes parmy raisonnable marge, et telles lignes que une fueille de papier porra comprendre du travers' (ibid.). The documents will be examined and judgement rendered on Valentine's Day – and they too will be carefully preserved.

This is a precise and comprehensive document: just what one might expect, perhaps, from what Pierre was, a senior administrator.<sup>10</sup> It is also, however, a highly suggestive one, and on various fronts. In the first place, of course, it stresses the sociability of poetry in the fifteenth century. Our modern stereotype of the poet prefers to imagine a tortured and solitary soul wresting meaning from resistant words. This account of the *Cour amoureuse* sees poetry as essentially a convivial exercise, with poetry playing a useful part in the formation of an independent cultural identity for the princely court.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the document stresses the prestige that is attached to poetry as a diversion and hence as a skill which courtiers will need to master. It is true that none of the *registres* has survived (if indeed they ever existed), nor is there any record of any of these elaborate meetings having taken place. But unless we are to

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<sup>9</sup> This sort of attention to detail is not unconvincing: c.f. the copy of the *Voir-Dit* in BNF fr. 9221, where lay-out, hand, and illustration are used to make the volume visually exciting (so, for instance, prose is copied in cursive, verse in a bâtarde hand: see Lawrence Earp, 'Scribal Practice, Manuscript Production and the Transmission of Music in Late Medieval France: The Manuscripts of Guillaume de Machaut' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 1983), pp. 120-29).

<sup>10</sup> For his career, see Bozzolo and Loyau, p. 59, and the introduction to his *Confession et testament*, ed. by Bidler.

<sup>11</sup> See Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, pp. 101-34.

think of the whole document as an elaborate spoof,<sup>12</sup> invented personally and privately by Pierre and his cronies, we must assume that the dukes and members of the highest aristocracy who lent their names to the charter were happy to envisage taking part not only in soirées of this sort, but also in competitions in which they would, on the one hand, produce poems for competitions in which they would expect to be judged on their mastery of poetic form, metrical skill, and strophic discipline, and on the other, would consider themselves entirely capable of judging others' poems on just these grounds. Thirdly, the document draws attention to the centrality of poetry simply as a diversion (it is, after all, to be the only activity for the *Cour amoureuse*); it sees nothing unbecoming, on the contrary, in devoting whole days to the composition and performance and judging of poetry, nor in imagining quite considerable resources employed in rewarding excellence. Fourthly, it suggests an interesting collaboration between those highest in the social hierarchies on the one hand, and what one might call the administrative class, the civil service, on the other; indeed between what I called, in my Introduction, the professionals and the amateurs. And finally, it underlines

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<sup>12</sup> Which of course it may be: scholars are more or less doubtful as to its real, historical existence. For sceptical views, see Richard Firth Green who thinks it a purely literary fiction probably invented by Isabelle of Bavaria ('The Familia Regis and the Familia Cupidinis', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 87-108, and Theodor Straub, 'Die Gründung des pariser Minnehofs', *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 77 (1961), 1-14 (who considers that the kernel of the *Cour amoureuse* might have been a small-scale entertainment, later expanded, considerably, in a complex fiction having very little relation to historical reality). From my point of view, the historicity of the *Cour amoureuse* is largely immaterial; what is striking is the apparent importance that is attached to it, and the effort that has gone into its elaboration.

the importance of the written word, the record.<sup>13</sup> Pierre de Hauteville, and presumably his noble patrons, saw nothing incongruous in drawing up a document whose preparation – the hand is careful, the pages are spacious, the coats of arms neat and precise – must have been costly,<sup>14</sup> and where their passionate concern for the poetic legacy they were leaving to posterity shows in the elaborate directives which cover copying, and page layout, and preservation. This document, in other words, addresses poetry as a valuable, and valued, collective phenomenon; it suggests the sort of social and ideological frame for poetic composition and reception that I want to build on in what follows.

Let me start with poetry as a collective phenomenon, and with a relatively unsophisticated instance which will, I hope, suggest how far issues of social positioning and prestige cannot but be inscribed in that phenomenon. “Venditions” or “ventes” d’amour’ are the product of one of those inconsequential little parlourgames that we imagine occupying an occasional courtly evening;<sup>15</sup> there is a nice description of just such an evening’s entertainment in an incunable volume in the Bibliothèque

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<sup>13</sup> See Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet’s *La Couleur de la mélancolie. La fréquentation des livres au XIVe siècle, 1300-1415* (Paris: Hatier, 1993), pp. 49-56.

<sup>14</sup> Another manuscript, Geneva, Bibliothèque universitaire, MS 179 bis, gives the names of the *Cour* from one of the poems deriving from the *Querelle de la Belle dame sans merci*; see Piaget, ‘La Cour amoureuse’, pp. 449-54.

<sup>15</sup> On parlourgames in general, and the ‘venditions’ in particular, see Martijn Rus, ‘D’un lyrisme l’autre. A propos des venditions d’amour, de Christine de Pizan aux recueils anonymes de la fin du Moyen âge’, *Cahiers de recherche médiévale*, 9 (2002), 201-13; Rus doubts whether the *venditions* are in fact extemporized. See also Leonard W. Johnson, *Poets as Players: Theme and Variation in Late Medieval French Poetry* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 88-93. On the importance of games in these closed societies, see Johann Huizinga, *Homo ludens: a study of the play element in culture* (London: Paladin, 1970). I return in ch. 2 to the game as ‘metacommunication’.



Nationale de France.<sup>16</sup> A first-person narrator is one of a little company that has been invited to bring along 'marchandise d'amour que avons a vendre, non pas pour argent mais a change l'une marchandise pour l'autre'. After supper, the company arrives. *La plus vielle* disconcerts the narrator by offering him an item for sale; his awkwardness is palpable, since 'je venoie pour vendre et je fus constrains d'acheter', but he manages to stammer out a response. After which, 'Tantost mes compaignons et pareillement les jones filles commencerent a desployer leurs marchandises et vendoient l'un a l'autre pelle mesle, qui en peust avoir si en eust'. And the narrator takes on the responsibility of recording 'leurs joyeux dis et esbatemens'.<sup>17</sup> The rules are simple enough. One of a couple of players, *L'Amant* and *L'Amye*, opens the game by offering to 'sell' the partner an object, an idea, a concept: something like 'Je vous vens l'aguille affilée'; the partner must improvise, briskly, the remaining three lines of a quatrain which, in line 2, takes the rhyme word and embroiders it, with as much grace and ingenuity as possible, and in lines 3-4 produces a witty couplet more or less relevant to the object proposed: so, following on from the line I have just quoted,

De fil blanc parmy compassée.  
Dieu doint bon jour à mon amy,  
Car tousjours je pense en luy.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In BNF Rés. Ye 93; it is printed in *Amorous Games: A Critical Edition of Les adevineaux amoureux*, ed. by James Woodrow Hassell (Austin, TX : published for the American Folklore Society by the University of Texas Press, 1974), pp. 248-50. Hassell also prints a sequence of *ventes*, pp. 250-56.

<sup>17</sup> *Amorous Games*, pp. 248-49.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from *Recueil de poésies françoises des XVe et XVIe siècles*, A. de Montaignon, Bibliothèque Elzévirienne, 13 vols (Paris: P. Jannet, 1856), V, p. 211. Montaignon prints his collection from 'trois éditions gothiques' which he does not identify: there are no fewer than 65 *ventes d'amour* here (pp. 204-23), and more in vol. VII, pp. 18-23. I return to the subject below,

or, more relevantly if not very lyrically,

Je vous vens l'odorant violette:  
C'est une fleur qui est indette [purple];  
Elle croist bas, elle croist hault.  
Accolez-moy, le cueur me fault.<sup>19</sup>

The little poems vary very much in quality: some, like these, fall back on hackneyed *rime pauvre* (not to say cliché!), some are rather more nimble, as in the following, where the effect of the *rime équivoque* depends on a rather adept use of *enjambement*:

Je vous vens le cueur du lyon.  
Vostre cueur et le mien *lion*  
*Ensemble*, d'un commun accord,  
Sans departir jusqu'à la mort.<sup>20</sup>

But these defter formal touches cannot disguise the fact that the versifiers are competent at best, and that most of the poems are pure poetic platitude; this is, as I said, a parlour game.

What may surprise modern readers, then, is to find that this parlour game also preoccupies a true poet, a professional, like Christine de Pizan. Take, for instance, the magnificent, sumptuously illustrated manuscript, the Queen's Manuscript, which Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France seems to have commissioned from Christine in

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pp. XXXX. See Madeleine Lazard, 'Ventes et demandes d'amour', in *Les Jeux à la Renaissance: Actes du XXIIIe Colloque international d'études humanistes, Tours, juillet 1980*, ed. by Philippe Ariès and Jean-Claude Margolin (Paris: J. Vrin, 1982), pp. 133-49, who point out the popularity of this little game to judge from the number of manuscripts and early printed books, and Bernard Ribémont, 'Les jeux à vendre de Christine de Pizan et les *Cent ballades d'amant et de dame*', *Le Moyen français*, 54 (2004), 75-85.

19 Ed. by Montaiglon, p. 211.

20 Ed. by Montaiglon, p. 213 (my italics).

1410 or 1411,<sup>21</sup> which contains Christine's collected works and which James Laidlaw calls 'the culmination of [her] career'.<sup>22</sup> Included in it, apparently as worthy as the complex moralisations of the *Epistre Othea* or the convoluted allegories of the *Mutacion de Fortune*, is a string of seventy consecutive *jeux a vendre*,<sup>23</sup> spaciouly, neatly copied, with elegant capitals, along with her other much more flamboyantly elaborate lyrics – *virelais*, *lais*, *ballades* – and along with the poet's most intellectually demanding works: works of philosophy, of 'autobiography', of politics. Christine's *jeux* are, we shall not be surprised to find, of a rather different order to the trite little quatrains we glanced at above:

Je vous vens le chappel de soie.  
 – Cuidiez vous qu'a pourveoir soie  
 D'ami plaisant, jeune et joly,  
 Qui de bon cuer m'aime et je li?

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<sup>21</sup> Or, of course, was presented with; to assume the Queen's commission goes beyond the available evidence.

<sup>22</sup> This is London, BL, Harley MS 4431, to which I return below (p. XXXX); Christine's *jeux a vendre* appear on ff. 34<sup>v</sup>–37<sup>v</sup>. I quote here from James C. Laidlaw, 'Christine de Pizan – An Author's Progress', *Modern Language Review*, 78 (1983), 532–50 (p. 532). C.f. on Christine's publishing history, idem, 'Christine de Pizan – A Publisher's Progress', *Romanic Review*, 82 (1987), 35–75. Sandra Hindman has done a detailed study of the Queen's Manuscript: 'The Composition of the Manuscript of Christine de Pizan's Collected Works in the British Library: A Reassessment', *British Library Journal*, 9 (1983), 93–123, from which she concludes that Christine was indeed the copyist and designer; c.f. Gilbert Ouy and Christine Reno, 'Identification des autographes de Christine de Pizan', *Scriptorium*, 34 (1980), 221–38. The *jeux a vendre* also appear in Christine's earlier presentation manuscripts, the *Livre de Christine* (see BNF 12779, ff. 45<sup>v</sup>–48<sup>v</sup>) and in the Duke's Manuscript, BNF MS fr. 835 (on fols 31<sup>r</sup>–34<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>23</sup> Her *Jeux à vendre* are edited by Maurice Roy in *Oeuvres poétiques*, 3 vols, SATF (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1886), I, pp. 187–205. On Christine's *jeux*, see Réjean Bergeron, 'Examen d'une oeuvre vouée à l'oubli: les *Jeux à vendre* de Christine de Pizan', in *Préludes à la Renaissance: aspects de la vie intellectuelle en France au XVe siècle*, ed. by Carla Bozzolo and Ezio Ornato (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1992), pp. 163–89, as well as Rus, 'D'un lyrisme l'autre' and Ribémont, 'Les *jeux à vendre*'.

N'anil voir; se pert bien sa peine  
 Qui de m'amour avoir se peine.<sup>24</sup>

As an exercise in the easy composition of verse, this is impressive; here as everywhere in her lyric poems, Christine is formally adventurous (note even here the consistent richness and ingenuity of her rhyming: *soie/soie; joly/je li*), and exploits the dialogic possibilities of male and female voice and the resources of prosody (note the dramatic *enjambement/soie D'ami*, which punctures the pretensions of the lady's would-be lover). Nothing, of course, can make the *gieux* more than a game – but they are, it seems, worthy of Christine's quite earnest attention: at some level, it appears, adept *gieux a vendre* consolidate Christine's identity and reputation as a social poet and must, presumably, afford her a measure of prestige.

But of course Christine is among those of the late-medieval poets – Froissart, Machaut – who best understood their market, and we must therefore assume that she too saw nothing demeaning in including little snatches of parlourgame verse in her *oeuvres complètes*. Variety is indeed something she makes one of the selling-points of her anthology: her prologue, which was presumably designed to puff the merits of the collection, promises that she will 'parler en maintes manieres Differens' and provide Isabeau with the opportunity to 'oïr de diverses matieres, Unes pesans, aultres legieres'<sup>25</sup> – and it might be that she was confident that her poetic reputation would be enhanced if she showed how ingeniously she could exploit even the most banal generative formula. But the attention she pays to what we cannot but think a frivolous game nevertheless seems surprising: poetic versatility, we realize, is an important

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<sup>24</sup> *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. by Roy, I, no. 24, pp. 193-94.

<sup>25</sup> *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. by Roy, I, p. xv.

social accomplishment, and it is therefore also, presumably, flattering to the potential patron to 'possess' not just a poet, but a resourceful one. Christine's multiple ingenuities, over the widest possible spectrum from the most serious to the most frivolous, are evidence of a sort of poetic and intellectual omnicompetence which, it seems, must have made her a sociocultural asset.

In the remainder of this chapter, I intend to explore some of these issues. A careful reading even of slight, repetitive poems like these, I shall suggest, allows us to set poetic creation in the context of an understanding of the structures of court society: what is conveyed in these verses, after all, and however rudimentarily, are competitive and strategic relationships. To participate, and to rise in the cultural hierarchy, required specific competences – competences which could be learned either through experience, or through a sort of training – and the cultural capital to be derived from acquiring the skills which produce the competent, clever *ventes d'amour* makes these little poems complex products of a socially situated act of utterance whose parameters we need to try to understand. To possess particular word-skills is to be included – and a court is necessarily designed to reward (and hence to foster) certain particular intellectual and social habits which mark belonging, and to ensure that those who do not possess these habits are outsiders who cannot belong. What I propose to sketch here is the range of social, intellectual, aesthetic, and even political positions which are available to the court poet, and the patron of poetry, in the later Middle Ages – because the patron too, it must be assumed, acquired cultural capital from the enrolling of the poet or the possession of the poetic manuscript. My argument here will have to do with what one might call the sociology of creation: what are the structures

of possibility attached to the lyric in the late Middle Ages, what rewards derive for the poet from socially accredited expertise,<sup>26</sup> or for the patron from enlisting a poet to one's household, or from possessing his, or of course her, collected works? I shall attempt, in other words, in the wake of Daniel Poirion's ground-breaking *Le Poète et le prince*,<sup>27</sup> to return the poem to its generative cultural and social circuits, to its role in a game of social relations, and to the material form in which it reaches us; I shall want to celebrate the paradoxical importance of the insignificant.

I should like, however, to start by thinking, quite banally, about the sort of social occasions that I have been taking for granted: how are we in fact to understand expressions like *occasional courtly evening*? There are, as I said, no surviving records of any of the grand reunions of the *Cour amoureuse*, nor are there, to my knowledge, any accounts of authentic poetry-evenings at the courts of the late Middle Ages; our best recourse therefore is fictions (in which however we must recognize the dangerous possibility of taking fiction for evidence of reality). I want to examine two fictions which make the lyric seem not just a simple, idiosyncratic pleasure, but a cultural weapon. The first, *Le Pastoralet*,<sup>28</sup> is an oddity. It is, if not the first, then certainly one of the

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<sup>26</sup> I do not only mean monetary reward: like Green (*Poets and Princepleasers*, pp. 124-27), I doubt that much that was very concrete always derived from composing verses. Social advancement is, surely, another matter ... as shown, perhaps, in the Renaissance by the highly successful careers of musicians: see Jeanice Brooks, *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> *Le Poète et le prince: L'évolution du lyrisme courtois de Guillaume de Machaut à Charles d'Orléans* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965; repr. Geneva: Slatkine, 1978).

<sup>28</sup> Ed. by Kervyn de Lettenhove (in *Chroniques relatives à l'histoire de la Belgique sous la domination des ducs de Bourgogne* (Brussels: Hayez, 1873), pp. 573-852), now replaced by Joel Blanchard's *Le Pastoralet*, Publications de l'Université de Rouen (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983); references in the text, by line-number, are to this latter. C.f. also Joël Blanchard,

earliest, of political *romans à clef*: the anonymous writer, who calls himself Bucarius,<sup>29</sup> is a passionately committed Burgundian writing somewhere around 1422 – in the middle, that is, of the internecine struggles between the Armagnac and Burgundian factions – who tells us in his prologue (1-36) that what he is offering is a pastoral *fiction* with a political message: his are *flables couvertes* designed for political purposes, which will enlist our admiration for the *loiaux* (the Burgundians) and our condemnation of the *faulz desloiaux* (the Armagnacs, or adherents of the house of Orléans). A number of the major political players of the time are to appear in the guise of Arcadian shepherds, under appropriate names: Charles VI himself is *Florentin*, his queen Isabeau of Bavaria is *Belligere*; Louis duke of Orléans appears as *Tristifer*, and Jean sans Peur, duke of Burgundy, as *Lëonet*. The overall story is rather convoluted; what I want to focus on here is just one little episode towards the beginning of what ‘Bucarius’ calls his *traittié*, an episode in which the rather dilettante shepherds gather to celebrate the feast of Venus (the author reassures us, hastily: we are not to think that these are *pagan* shepherds; no, no, no, on the contrary, they are undoubtedly *pastours crestiens* (32), and the feast of Venus is merely local colour: ‘pour estrangier ma Muse’ (30) ...). The event, says the poet-narrator, is memorably *gracieux* (125) – a little light flirtation, dancing, singing; then, after a while, the revellers retire under a may-tree to rest, and Florentin proposes a light-hearted competition: a prize, a beautifully embroidered belt, will be awarded to whichever of the shepherds produces

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*La Pastorale en France aux XIVe et XVe siècles. Recherches sur les structures de l’imaginaire médiéval* (Paris: Champion, 1983), pp. 260-67.

29 On ‘Bucarius’ identity, see Blanchard’s edition, pp. 24-5; he concludes merely that the writer was Picard, and probably from the circle of the counts of Saint-Pol.

the most accomplished ‘rondel ou le plus loera S’amie’ (442-43). The shepherds withdraw for a while into poetic solitude, to concentrate, ‘pour miex faire et estre quois’ (447), and then return to the company to recite their rondeaux in front of the judge, Belligere (Queen Isabeau of Bavaria), ‘qui fu sage De rime’ (497).

The first of the rondeaux is by Florentin himself, Charles VI:

La tres belle beaulté m’amie  
 Ne diroit pas uns aultres Tullés;  
 Sens et valour n’abaissent mie  
 La tres belle beaulté m’amie.  
 Elle est de grant douchour garnie,  
 Et sy n’est pas des plus entulles ... (507-12)

This is, of course, a rather pedestrian piece, with its lamely pleonastic *belle beaulté* and its unambitious *rime pauvre amie/mie/garnie*; it has just one saving orotund little touch, that single ingenious *rime riche Tullés* (M. *Tullius Cicero*)/*entulles* (‘coquettish’, ‘flirtatious’); scarcely enough, one would have thought, to inspire applause (but the lacklustre poet is Charles VI ... and he is applauded). A second shepherd, Léonet, the duke of Burgundy, is the next to produce an offering:

M’amie est Hester et Helaine,  
 Et Hero et Penelopé,  
 Et de Vergy la Chastelaine;  
 M’amie est Hestor et Helaine,  
 Car humble est et belle et certaine  
 Et chaste et celans son secré ... (527-32)

This time, the poet’s stock-in-trade is the string of proper names: proper names which are all, of course, those of women who are bywords for beauty (Helen), or for their constancy (Esther, Hero, Penelope, the châtelaine de Vergy). The names are, however, a list, no more: Léonet, the duke, has made no attempt to embroider on them or to draw out any particularity which might make them especially appropriate



comparators. And he is no stylist: his rhymes are poor (*Penelopé/sacré*) – unlike those of the next of the shepherd-poets, Pompal,<sup>30</sup> whose knowledge of mythologies and skill with rhyme are clearly considerably more sophisticated:

Pymalïon a m'amie entaillie  
Et Phebus l'a freschement coulouree;  
Zephirus lui a grant doulchour baillie  
Pymalïon a m'amie entaillie,  
Paris d'amours l'a duite et consillie,  
Et Orpheüs a sa voix acordee ... (561-66)

This third shepherd not only has the trick of richer rhyme (*entaillie/baillie/consillie*); he is also able to use classical references with a certain knowing deftness. He has created a conceit, not just a list, whereby he imagines that Pygmalion, Phoebus, Zephir, Paris, Orpheus have jointly created and moulded his *amie*: the sun, Phoebus, has coloured her cheeks, the soft breeze, Zephirus, has lent her his freshness, Pygmalion has sculpted her, Orpheus has given her the gift of music. His lady, gratified, is impressed enough to dance an approving little pirouette ('ung saultet fist ...', 270-71), while the fourth of the poets, Lupal, embarks on a rather different challenge:

M'amie est belle, blanche et bloie,  
Courtoise et coulouree a point,  
Et doulce, debonaire et quoie.  
M'amie est belle, blanche et bloie  
Et plaisans et plaine de joie.  
De biens deffault en ly n'a point ... (577-82)

This time, the rondeau starts off with a rather dogged alphabet-game.<sup>31</sup> adjectives beginning with *bs* in the first line, *cs* in the second, *ds* in the third ... the fifth *ps*.

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30 *Pompal* is Clignet de Bréban, *Lupal* (see below) is Bernard VII, comte d'Armagnac: both are prominent political players (*Le Pastoralet*, ed. by Blanchard, p. 270, and his *La Pastorale en France*, p. 151).

Except, of course, that the sequence is imperfect, broken by the intrusive *quoie* in the third line, and, surely, by the sixth line where the poet seems to have fallen back, disheartened, on the clumsy syntactical inversion which makes the negative particle *point* into a rather inadequate rhyme-word. Which brings us to the last of the shepherds, Tristifer, Louis d'Orléans – who, to the scandal of the poet-narrator produces not the rondeau that the shepherds had been set, but a ballade:

Plus plaisant bergiere n'a pas  
 De Colette, de Rains a Roye.  
 Son corps est tailliés a compas  
 Miex que dire je ne porroie;  
 Car el est parmy la corroie  
 Gresle, par les rains large et plaine,  
 Hault a point, et s'a toujours joie:  
 C'est des aultres la souveraine.

Soubz son chainse de canevas  
 Sa char plus que la noif blancheie.  
 Delis dois a et longs les bras,  
 Dont miex en musette notoie.  
 Doulz regard a la simple et coie;  
 Cler chante comme une seraine.  
 Bien scet houler en la saulchoie:  
 C'est des aultres la souveraine (599-614)

This is a far more accomplished – even flamboyant – piece. In the first place, Louis' shepherdess, unlike the insubstantial figures of the previous pieces, is precisely imagined: narrow-waisted, broad-hipped, slim-fingered ... studiedly seductive. In the second, formally speaking, Louis is not just a competent, but a rather impressive poet: here are the deft alliterations (*Plus/plaisant*; *Rains/Roye*; *delis dois*; *miex/musette*); the

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<sup>31</sup> Common enough in the period: see Eustache Deschamps, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. by Le Queux de Saint-Hilaire, SATF, 11 vols (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1878-1903), III, p. 220 (ballade CCCCXVII), and c.f.. Paul Zumthor, *Le Masque et la lumière: la poésie des Grands Rhétoriciens* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), pp. 74-5.

pleasingly rich – but unforced – rhymes (*pas/compas*, *seraine/souveraine*); the rather ingenious use of *enjambement* ('parmy la corroie Gresle'). He uses syntactical inversion emphatically rather than when rhyme fails him; he can marry a deft chiasmus to a neat alliteration ('*Delis dois a et longs les bras*'), and, unlike the earlier poets, whose vocabulary is rather hackneyed, his is concrete and inventive (*corroie*, *a compas*, *rains*) – so much so, in fact, that one of his words, *houler*, 'to use a (shepherd's) crook', appears nowhere else in French. Not surprisingly, it is his poem which wins the prize, as having, says the judge, *mieudre saveur* – although this is to our poet-narrator's distinct annoyance, because whatever the merits of the poem-as-poem might be, it remains a ballade, and not a rondeau: the judge, Belligere is, says the narrator, peevishly, *pervertie ... par amours et par sottie* (649-50; Isabeau of Bavaria was, according to gossip, thought to be Louis d'Orléans' mistress).

By this time, I'm afraid, the reader may be wondering what can possibly justify spending so long on, and quoting so extensively from, a set of fixed-form lyrics none of which – with the possible exception of the last – could conceivably be called poetic jewels. But in fact it is the occasion itself that is interesting, and what it tells us about the practice of poetry in the fifteenth century. It has been something of a critical cliché to paint the late-medieval court as a place where courtiers simply, effortlessly, uncritically, produced strings of competent rondeaux and adequate ballades to order: where everyone could versify, at the drop of a hat, where the lyric was merely ornamental, and where no critical standards existed or were applied. The fiction of the *Pastoralet*, on the contrary, paints verse not as a saccharine, ornamental game, but rather as competitive and strategic, a way of expressing relationships in verse, a way

of using verse, as I said earlier, to consolidate an identity, or to mark a distinction. Poetry, here, is a highly sophisticated product, what I called a socially situated act of utterance: it supposes participants who share cultural and intellectual habits, and readers who grasp collective meanings. Our poet-narrator, I suggest, is a highly conscious, culturally adept versifier, who understands and values strategic and complex verse-games: there are mechanisms and critical manipulations behind what might seem, on the surface, to be a rather mawkish little pastoral interlude.

Before I explore this further, let me look at another fictional poetry evening. Jean de Le Mote, who flourished in the mid-fourteenth century, was very much the professional poet, it seems, at the court of the counts of Hainaut – to the extent indeed that he was commissioned by Philippa of Hainaut, Edward III's queen, to write an obituary eulogy for her father Guillaume III d'Avesnes, count of Hainaut, in 1339.<sup>32</sup> Jean seems to have frequented the *puys* of Northern France, but then, in 1340 or so, to have established himself in Paris, in the household of a patron, Simon de Lille, who was the royal goldsmith. It was for this patron, in the mid-fourteenth century, that he wrote an odd little romance called *Le Parfait du Paon*, which is attached to the Alexander the Great cycle.<sup>33</sup> The story is too complicated to be summarized easily

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32 *Li Regret Guillaume comte de Hainaut* (...), ed. by Auguste Scheler (Louvain: Lefever, 1992).

33 Ed. by Richard J. Carey, North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972); line-references henceforward in the text. Simon de Lille died in 1348; the romance must therefore have been composed in the 1340s. On Jean's relations with Simon, see Carey's edition, pp. 11-12, and some interesting speculations in Mary A Rouse and Richard H Rouse, 'The Goldsmith and the Peacocks: Jean de la Mote in the household of Simon de Lille, 1340', *Viator*, 28 (1997), 283-303.

here<sup>34</sup> – and in fact, what I want to concentrate on is a single episode where Alexander and his court are invited, by a quartet of elegant and aristocratic *damoiselles*, to *parler et argüer*, indulge in pleasant conversation, and, as in the *Pastoralet*, to take part in a poetic competition.<sup>35</sup> Eight competitors, aristocratic amateurs, produce ballades – the four *damoiselles*, and Alexander and three of his close companions – and the point to which I want to draw attention is the seriousness, the professionalism, with which the whole occasion is treated.

The rules of this game are precise, and this time carefully set out. The amateur poets are competing for a first prize consisting of a gold crown, or a second, of a *vert capel de flours* (990). Before each of the competitors recites his or her poem, they have to swear, by Venus and Diana, that this is original work never previously performed ('aillieurs autres fois ne fu dicte n'oïe'; 1049). Each competitor is asked to compose, to copy out, and then to perform (sing) his or her ballade: one of them, Preamuse, protests that she has not had time to compose a musical setting ('J'ai si grant haste au fere qu'elle n'est pas notee'; 1209). And when all eight ballades have been performed, the judges – the courtiers who have not themselves performed – retire to consider their verdict. Now, this is not a task which they take at all lightly. The

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34 For a convenient summary of the place of this poem in the wider Alexander cycle, and more narrowly in the 'peacock' group (*Les Voeux du Paon*, *Le Restor du Paon*, *Le Parfait du Paon*), see A. Thomas, 'Jacques de Longuyon et ses imitateurs', in *Histoire littéraire de la France*, XXXVI (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1927), pp. 1-86.

35 The episode occupies laisses 30-51 of the romance. Carey is relatively brief: there are longer discussions by Friedrich Gennrich, 'Der Gesangswettstreit im *Parfait du Paon*', *Romanische Forschungen*, 58/59 (1947), 208-32, and E. Hoepfner, 'Die Balladen des Dichters Jehan de la Mote', *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 35 (1911), 153-66. For a more recent, and excellent, analysis, see Douglas Kelly, *Medieval Imagination: Rhetoric and the Poetry of Courtly Love* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp. 255-56.

poet reassures us that each individual ballade is read *plus de .x. fois et bien consideree* (1397), and tells us that the process of judgement was long and arduous – and contentious: ‘Moult grant descort i ot au jugier et meslee’ (1398). But the jury, finally, pronounces – on, and this is the point to which I want to draw attention because here too the echoes of Pierre de Hauteville’s charter are conspicuous – highly professional, technical grounds, and after meticulous analysis. One of the ballades, Dan Clin’s, is competent enough, but there is a *faus ronmant* in the second vers (1412): this seems to mean – Jean’s technical vocabulary, unfortunately, is idiosyncratic – that the first line of the second stanza is hypermetric, since Dan Clin seems to have counted *audicion* (1321) as four syllables, *avision* as three.<sup>36</sup> Tholomer is repetitive (*redicte de sens* (1414);<sup>37</sup> Aymon’s ballade is marred by *.i. genoul* (1415);<sup>38</sup> Alexander himself has produced a ballade which is technically unblemished, but whose lexicon is relatively ordinary (*il ne reva point tres hautement parlant*; 1419). Of the *damoiselles*, Deromadaire, say the judges, *un poi va vantant*: does this refer to the message of the ballade, which is that having formerly discouraged her lover, she

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<sup>36</sup> I do not understand *ronmant* in this context: is it related to *romant*, ‘langage’, ‘discours’ (Godefroy VII, p. 231)? C.f. Jehan Bodel, *Chanson des Saisnes*, ed. by Annette Brasseur (Geneva: Droz, 1989): ‘Sire, dits li quens Forques, entendez mon *ronmans* ...’, which the editor glosses ‘paroles’? Or might it mean ‘a mistake “in French”’?

<sup>37</sup> According to Pierre Fabri, *Le grand et vrai Art de pleine rhétorique, de Pierre Fabri*, ed. by M. Héron, 2 vols (Rouen: Imprimerie E. Cagniard, 1889-90), II, p. 121, *les anciens faicteurs* sanctioned *redictes* provided there was a change of grammatical function; presumably, a *redicte de sens* here is condemned because the meaning and function are unchanged.

<sup>38</sup> Carey (p. 190) simply gives ‘une erreur (en poésie)’; I find no other example of this word used in a literary-critical sense; is it related to one of the meanings noted by *FEW* (IV, p. 115, for 1423): ‘bracket’? Kelly, *Medieval Imagination*, p. 255, suggests ‘grammatical error’: the lines ‘Souffissance me donne pais Et bien fais Francement’ (1155-57) are, he says, syntactically ambiguous.

now proposes, with serene confidence, to give herself to him? Saigremore, like Alexander, has produced *mot ... pas haut*, but they are pleasing enough (1423); Preamuse's *balade feminine* is, unfortunately, marred by *.i. piler* (1425) (does this, as the editor of the romance suggests, mean a *cheville*?<sup>39</sup>). The cream of the crop, they are agreed, is the ballade composed by *Clarete au cuer sachant* (1428).

Now, Clarete's *balade coronnee* is particularly interesting; I give it from Carey's transcription, but with punctuation amended to underline Clarete's semantic and syntactic sophistication:<sup>40</sup>

Tres gracieuse sui des biens d'amer,  
S'en lo amours de cuer tres humlement,  
Qui m'a a bon et bel fait assener  
Par tel maniere et par itel couvent  
Que quiconques verroit no maintieng gent,  
Veïr porroit tout en une assamblee  
Amours, amé amant, amie amee.

Amours y est qui nous doit gouverner  
Et s'est amez de moy outreement  
Et s'est amans, ce doi je supposer;  
Amie sui aussi parfaitement  
Et sui amee – espoirs vrais le m'apprent.  
Dont par ces poins a il en no pensee  
Amours amé amant amie amee.

C'est noble compaignie a regarder  
C'on s'i mantient si amoureusement  
Que cuers humains ne le saroit penser.  
Et dame y a, toute honneur plainement,  
Dont ja oster n'en voeil men douch talent,

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39 Again, I find no mention of this elsewhere, and can only assume that it is related, metaphorically, to *piler*, 'prop': see *FEW* VIII, 475.

40 Carey, unfortunately, punctuates the refrain-line consistently as a simple word-string – 'Amours, amé, amant, amie, amee' – which nullifies the intended, subtle, effect. Of course, my punctuation does precisely the same, by disambiguating the refrain-line: see David Mus, 'François Villon: le drame du texte', in *Villon at Oxford: The Drama of the Text*, ed. by Michael Freeman and Jane H. M. Taylor (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 1-34.

Ainchois seray et suivray a duree  
Amours amé, amant amie amee. (1349-69)

This is a truly ambitious, even virtuoso, piece which capitalizes, with great syntactic and prosodic ingenuity, on the repetition which defines the ballade. Take, for instance, the poetic transforms of the refrain-line.<sup>41</sup> In the first stanza, Clarete imagines an *assamblée* of three entities: Amours itself, the beloved, the *amé ami*, and herself, the *amie amee* (thus ‘Love, the beloved lover, and the beloved lady’); in the second, *amant* becomes a gerundive, the beloved lover loving the loved lady; in the third, Clarete promises to follow the beloved lover who loves the loved lady. Clarete’s lyric self-confidence here, her conscious and careful exploitation of the syntactic potential of cognates, supposes sophisticated and responsive listeners/readers: this is a *jeu d’esprit* only appropriate for a coterie audience with whom one might share an appreciation of wittily recreative verse. And of course, it is precisely to this that, by implication, the judging process draws attention: the judges’ response – Clarete is labelled *au cuer sachant*, ‘well-trained, well taught’ – is itself the trained response of the connoisseur, manifesting, as does Clarete herself, an unexpectedly acute consciousness of language: this poem is, they say, *la mix ouvree* (1408).

Now, we must be careful here: Jean de Le Mote himself is a professional poet, and so has every interest in presenting poetry as something which is complex and demanding and difficult; indeed, as the little competition episode draws to a close he segues into a diatribe against the *faiseurs*, journeyman-poets, who think that their

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<sup>41</sup> Which resembles one of Eustache Deschamps *ballades amoureuses*, no. DXXXIX; *Oeuvres complètes*, III, p. 179.



*ouvrage poissant*, filthy verses, are *rusez*, 'witty',<sup>42</sup> and as valuable as is his own *plus subtil oeuvre* (1444-50); thank goodness, he continues, with every appearance of no doubt self-interested sincerity, for his own patron, *li boins Symons de Lille*, who allows him 'vivre, chambre et clerc escribant Pour faire li biax dis' (1453-54). Nor can we at all assume that what Jean is giving us is a simple mirror-image of an evening at the court of Hainaut, or at 'Symon's house in Paris: again, it is in a poet's professional and material interest to lend poetry a disproportionately important role in cementing élite sociability. But it must also be in his interest, as it was in the interest of the anonymous author of *Le Pastoralet*, not to produce a scene so implausible as to defy his audience's credulity<sup>43</sup> – and if so, the portrait he paints for us is an intriguing one. In the first place, the poets are all presented as perfectly competent – in some cases more than competent. True, when the *damoiselles* initially propose a competition, Alexander and his followers respond with studied self-deprecation, like Edwardian gentlemen-sportsmen desperate to avoid the slightest appearance of professionalism: 'je n'en sai une aguille escassee' (982: 'a broken needle'<sup>44</sup>), says Alexander. But in fact all of them are perfectly capable of rhyme more or less rich, of rhetorical flights, of what I earlier called strophic discipline. Secondly, in spite of their self-conscious and calculated casualness, all the poets recognize the effort that is involved in poetic success: as Alexander says, 'ci faut grant *estudie*' (1018). Poetry, then, is not

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<sup>42</sup> For this sense of *rusé*, see Godefroy, X, 603.

<sup>43</sup> In a rather revealing throw-away comment, Christine de Pizan supports this image with a description of a courtly evening where 'qui mieulz mieulz chascun devisoit, Ou d'amours qui s'en avisoit Ou de demandes gracieuses': *Dit de la Rose*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, II, p. 31 (II. 276-78).

<sup>44</sup> A cliché; see Baudouin de Condé, *Li Contes du Pellicam*, ed. by Auguste Scheler in *Dits et contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son fils Jean de Condé* (Brussels: Victor Devaux, 1866-67), I. 333.

effortless; on the contrary, even the most amateur of poets will benefit from instruction and practice – and this in turn, of course, suggests that value attaches to an expertise which sheer native wit cannot inculcate.<sup>45</sup> Every stage of the poetic process as it is portrayed in these fictions – the inculcation of poetic techniques, the execution of the poems, the importance attached to presentation and preservation – demonstrates just how far investment in the poetic market is felt to be worthwhile; the readiness to invest – time, money, forethought – is an index of just what importance is attached to the cultural capital that competent lyric-making represents.

Before I explore this further, let me return for a moment to the *Pastoralet*. What I drew attention to, in my analysis of those rather commonplace fixed-form lyrics, was the range of poetic manoeuvres that the writer lent his poets. The first, I suggested, had only one trick up his sleeve: the single, rather histrionic rhyme *Tulles/entulles*. The second, apparently, had at his fingertips – because, by implication and convention, poets are said to extemporize – a convenient set of references: no need to do more than allude, perfunctorily, since the allusions are so familiar that readers can be relied on to supply their own frame of reference. The third poet did a bit better than this; he too specialized in allusion, but with, in his case, a degree of learning: he exploited the allusive commonplaces at the service of a quite elegant conceit. The fourth attempts a phonetic game – one not uncommon in the late Middle Ages – whereby the poet selects lexemes alphabetically. And the fifth, the eventual winner of the tournament, is knowing, agile: his poetic staples include deft use of sound and rhyme and rhythm, precise and even technical vocabulary, and a nice, self-deprecatory wit. As I set it out

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<sup>45</sup> Daniel Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, pp. 175-77, shows poets complaining that 'le travail de versification commence à peser comme un labour imposé et un dur métier'.

like this, of course, what is obvious is the way in which the poets are, increasingly, endowed with sheer poetic proficiency: from Charles VI's rather trite lack of poetic imagination to Louis d'Orléans' flamboyancy – and what this in turn points to is the importance attached precisely to proficiency. Our poet-narrator – and it is difficult not to see this as a perfectly conscious act – has made his poets progressively more adept: he may disapprove, vehemently, of the fact that Isabeau of Bavaria gives the prize to a ballade rather than to a rondeau, but he has carefully endowed this last of his poets, Louis, with a lightness of touch, a gift with words and sounds which evince an intelligent grasp of the practice of poetry (a caveat, of course: one cannot but wonder, if such poetic proficiency is lent to the hated and despised Louis, just how far our poet-narrator approves of such expertise: are we being invited to see Louis as a bit flash, a touch meretricious ...?). It is obvious that, tacitly, the poet-narrator has graded the poems he invents for his characters: graded them according to skill and expertise. A careful reading of these apparently slight, repetitious poems, and of their formal, rhetorical, and aesthetic moves, in other words, allows us to think about the skills – the *habitus* – which informs them, about the stakes – the *field* – in which they are deployed.

I have used, in these last few paragraphs, expressions – *cultural capital*, *habitus*, *field* – which I borrow from the French sociologist of culture, Pierre Bourdieu, and which imply the sociocultural angle that I am proposing to use in approaching the late-medieval lyric. What I am intending to measure the latter against is Bourdieu's model of social relations, in which the production and reception of intellectual and cultural artefacts is defined strategically, as a way in which individuals and social

groups mark their distinction and consolidate their identities. For Bourdieu,<sup>46</sup> culture in general and literary creation in particular need to be seen in the context of the whole structure of relationships in society: language, culture, and social relations are internally coherent and interdependent systems, to understand which all their elements require examination. Human beings in general, and poets in particular, are necessarily participants within a field, a structured site of essentially competitive relations which offers a range of social, intellectual or aesthetic positions: structures of possibility which can be deployed strategically, competitively, for individual advantage. At stake in any particular field is 'power': a field is an *espace de jeu*<sup>47</sup> or *champ du pouvoir*<sup>48</sup> in which players manoeuvre, more or less expertly, to acquire a reward, a symbolic capital, which may be to do with rank, or pecuniary advantage, or merely self-esteem and prestige. Those competing in any particular field, if they are to be successful, will have to possess the specific skills, the *habitus*, which will lend them competitive advantage – which will enable them, again in Bourdieu's terms, to acquire symbolic capital. And by *habitus* is meant an internalized set of rules – not necessarily

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46 Bourdieu is exceptionally prolific, and I do not pretend to have explored all his voluminous writings: I base myself, principally, on his 'Champ intellectuel et projet créateur', *Les Temps modernes*, 246 (nov. 1966), 865-905; 'Champ de pouvoir, champ intellectuel et habitus de classe', *Scolies: Cahiers de recherche de l'Ecole normale supérieure*, 1 (1971), 7-26; *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 1992). For the application of Bourdieu to the medieval field, see *The Practice of Medieval Literature*, ed. by Mark Chinca, Simon Gaunt, Sarah Kay, and Nicolette Zeeman, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, sp. no. 33/3 (1997).

47 For Bourdieu, the *espace de jeu* is a 'field of objective relations between individuals or institutions who are competing for the same stake': *Sociology in Question* (London: SAGE, 1993), p. 74.

48 *Les règles de l'art*, p. 300.

articulated – which govern practice in the field: not necessarily articulated because, according to Bourdieu, any field generates its own habitus in those who compete for field-specific symbolic capital: the habitus is a social heritage, acquired, progressively and often tacitly, from family, or school, or milieu. To possess or to acquire the relevant habitus is to accede to the cultural competence which permits cultural production on the one hand, in the present instance the writing of the poem, but also, on the other, cultural reception, the reading of the poem: without that competence, without knowledge of the relevant codes, a poem is an empty sequence of words. What Bourdieu says is, of course, based on extensive, indeed encyclopedic, analyses of present-day fields: publishing practices, the French education system, access to and preferences in museums and art-galleries and reading-matter, allocation of posts within the French cultural and intellectual hierarchies – and the sort of social and commercial pressures which are inescapable in the modern do not, of course, obtain *tel quel* within the medieval world: Bourdieu's insistence, for example, on the text as commodity mediated by publishing houses is not a model easily transferable to the medieval court.<sup>49</sup> What I want to suggest here, however, is that within the very concrete field of such a court, issues to do with the writer/poet himself as a commodity

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49 Even a limited Bourdieuan analysis of any field is immensely time-consuming, and such an analysis will not be possible in my field where we are dependent on records which are fragmentary and unsystematic. Nevertheless, I hope to be able to convince readers that the understanding of the functioning of medieval verse made possible by the Bourdieuan model and which is largely sociocultural is preferable to other models so far suggested. For a *mise en garde*, however, see Toril Moi, 'The Challenge of the Particular Case: Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture and Literary Criticism', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 58 (1997), 497-508. To use Bourdieu, moreover, has the advantage of setting aside the questions that Green rightly raises in his *Poets and Princepleasers* (pp. 71-100) as to whether the prince-patrons were themselves lettered, by emphasizing the social rather than the intellectual value of the book.

are essential: that just as the modern writer or poet is at the mercy of modes of production regulated and imposed by financial return and media success, so the court poet, or the courtier-poet, is a competitor in a field where to operate efficiently as a poet, to possess the habitus of the poet, is a passport to material gains and favour, and, as a consequence, that to acquire the habitus of the poet is an investment which a courtier in pursuit of cultural capital might be well advised to make.<sup>50</sup>

Let me turn then to poetry as a passport and return to a poet-historian who consistently incorporates verse-as-capital into his narratives and even into his autobiography, making poems, as it were, into a currency: Jean Froissart. We know him, of course, primarily as an historian – indeed, he himself took considerable pride in his privileged identity as what we might call a remembrancer<sup>51</sup> – but when he needed to curry favour with a new court, or enlist a patron, it seems that he understood verse to be a better social passport than sober, factual prose. As we saw in the Introduction, when Froissart came to make his fact-finding journey to Gaston de Foix’s remote court in the Pyrenees in 1388, it was with a romance, the *Roman de Meliador*, that he prepared the ground – which may account for the fact that when, in 1395, Froissart visited England with every hope of favour at the court of Richard II, it was once again not history but a volume of poetry that he presented as his credentials: he describes it, lovingly, luxuriatingly, a sumptuously bound, elegantly copied and illustrated volume

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50 This chapter is much indebted to Poirion’s encyclopedic *Le Poète et le prince* and Cerquiglini-Toulet’s *La Couleur de la mélancolie*.

51 As witness the prologue to his *Chroniques*, I, ed. by Siméon Luce (Paris: Mme Vve. J. Renouard, 1869), variants, pp. 209-11.

bound in velvet studded with gold.<sup>52</sup> The king graciously accepts it – and all the more so when he discovers the nature of the contents:

Adont me demanda le roy de quoy il [sc. le livre] traittoit. Je luy dis: ‘D’amours.’ De ceste response fut-il tous resjouys, et regarda dedens le livre en plusieurs lieux et y lisy, car moult bien parloit et lisoit le franchois, et puis le fist prendre ... et porter en sa chambre de retraite, et me fist de plus en plus bonne chièr.<sup>53</sup>

Both these *récits de publication*,<sup>54</sup> by a writer who was after all highly successful in accumulating cultural capital and competing in his own historicizing field, are dramatic examples of acts of creative expression designed culturally and materially for appropriate social milieux where they can confer value; they also, however, show the poet to be remarkably adept in understanding the nature of the field in which he competes, dexterous in meeting what he clearly hopes will be the trained sensibilities of potential new patrons, and therefore shrewd in judging the symbolic value of what he could offer.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Which may, perhaps, have been a manuscript now BNF fr. 831: see Peter Dembowski’s introduction to his edition of *Le Paradis d’amour* and *L’Orloge amoureux* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), pp. 8-9. On the manuscript as ‘status symbol’, see Brigitte Buettner, ‘Profane Illuminations, Secular Illusions: Manuscripts in Late Medieval Courtly Society’, *Art Bulletin*, 74 (1992), 75-90.

<sup>53</sup> *Chroniques*, ed. by Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1867-77), XV, p. 167.

<sup>54</sup> The expression comes from *Groupe de recherches interdisciplinaires sur l’histoire de la littérature. De la publication: entre Renaissance et Lumières*, ed. by Christian Jouhaud and Alain Viala (Paris: Fayard, 2002), introduction.

<sup>55</sup> Froissart’s fictions, too, often play with the idea of verse as passport: in the *Espinette amoureuse* (ed. by Anthime Fourrier (Paris: Klincksieck, 1963), p. 140), for instance, the ‘I’ reads a *virelai* to win permission to leave England. Eustache Deschamps gives a fascinating account of presenting a copy of Machaut’s *Voir Dit* to Louis de Mâle, Count of Flanders: ‘Je lui baillié voz lettres en papier Et vo livre qu’il aime chierement; Lire m’y fist, present maint chevalier’ (*Oeuvres complètes*, I, ballade CXXVII, p. 248-49).

I labour this point – Froissart’s canny forethought in judging what, in his own society, will best accumulate what Bourdieu calls cultural capital<sup>56</sup> – partly as a corrective to fictional accounts in medieval romances which, by convention, as we said, so often depict carefree, effortless lyric-making, and which suggest that to create a perfectly satisfactory ballade or rondeau needs no more than youthful high spirits and a bit of spare time. Froissart’s own *Meliador* is an offender here:<sup>57</sup> many of the fixed-form lyrics that he weaves into the romance are, the fiction pretends, thrown together by some knight riding towards Scotland (‘Melyador fist ... Sus le chemin qu’il chevaucoit, Une balade’; 15,667-69), or drinking at a spring (‘Melyador se rafresci De l’aigue, car moult faisoit chaut, Et puis si commença en hault A chanter’; 23,213-16) – or are casually, breezily, inspired by some passing thought of the beloved (‘Sentemens noviaus li approce Et, encores en chevaucant, Mist la .i. rondelet avant ....’; 4352-54). On the contrary: everything, in those disingenuous accounts of his using love-poetry to win the favour of a patron that I quoted earlier, suggests that Froissart knew precisely the symbolic value of these artistic artefacts; that he realized that to master the making of poetry is to access a dominant, and potentially valuable, culture, to manufacture one’s own inclusion; that the ability to compose an elegant *dit*, a clever

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56 C.f. Christine de Pizan sending copies of her works to England to ensure that her son become a part of the household of Henry IV: ‘le roy Henri, qui encores est, qui s’attribua la couronne, vid desditz livres et dictiez que j’avoie ja plusieurs envoieez, comme desireuse de lui faire plaisir, audit conte [sc. Earl of Salisbury]. Si lui vint a congnoissance tout ce qu’il en estoit. Adonc tres joieusement prist mon enfant vers lui et tint chierement et en tres bon estat’ (*Le livre de l’Advison Cristine*, ed. by Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac, Etudes Christiniennes, 4 (Paris: Champion, 2001), p. 112) – and sending more to get permission for him to be released back to France (ibid., p.166).

57 Again I quote from the edition by Longnon; line references in the text.



rondeau or an accomplished ballade is a ready-made means, a strategy, to secure a position within the cultural field of the late-medieval court, and that an appearance of careless elegance is a valuable asset.

Less guarded moments in his pseudo-autobiographies<sup>58</sup> do indeed suggest that lyric-making is by no means as effortless as *Meliador* pretends. In his *Espinette amoureuse*, for instance, Froissart is eager to ensure that his pseudo-autobiographical lady (and, presumably, his real audience) recognizes his virtuoso feat in managing one hundred different rhymes in her honour ('Dame, cent clauses desparelles, Pour vostre amour, – n'est pas mervelles –, Ai mis en rime').<sup>59</sup> So too is Guillaume de Machaut, no doubt Froissart's inspiration, in his *Fontaine amoureuse* ('Cent rimes ay mis dedens ceste rime Qui bien les conte' – and all *despareilles*);<sup>60</sup> so too is Christine de Pizan, puffing the fact that she has achieved the admittedly remarkable feat of writing some 3500 lines of the *Livre du duc des vrais amans* in demanding *rimes léonines*, and stressing the sheer effort and skill that this has demanded:

Ainsi l'a voulu parfaire  
Pour monstrier son escience;  
Car *labour a, et science*,  
De *lonc procès* demener  
Par tel rime.<sup>61</sup>

These are, though, it is important to note, what I called in my Introduction professional poets – and it may be that more aristocratic poets were less impressed by feats of

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<sup>58</sup> A term I borrow from Laurence de Looze: see his *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century: Juan Ruiz, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart and Geoffrey Chaucer* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997).

<sup>59</sup> Ed. by Fourrier, ll. 2340-42.

<sup>60</sup> Ed. by Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet (Paris: Stock, 1993), ll. 1021-22, 1052.

<sup>61</sup> *Le Livre du duc des vrais amans*, ed. by Thelma S. Fenster (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), p. 198.

virtuoso prosody:<sup>62</sup> Jean de Garenceières, for instance, a minor poet-aristocrat whom we shall meet again in the next chapter, writing from his prison in Bordeaux to some of his poetic correspondants, dismisses their convoluted, difficult versifying: ‘Seigneurs, vous m’avez envoyé Ung escript de vostre partie Qui est si grandement rimé Que, par Dieu, je ne l’enten mye’.<sup>63</sup> But this in turn is, perhaps, belied by the implication of a number of fictional episodes which seem to suggest that even amateurs thought of verse as something arduous and demanding, not, in other words, an idle game for odd leisure moments: witness Marthe, in the fifteenth-century *Roman d’Ysaïe le Triste*, so absorbed in composing a *canchonette* that she is oblivious to what is going on around her:

[Yrions] le [sc. Marthe] trouve faisant ung escrit. Lors le salue et elle ne dist mot, car sy grant entente avoit a ce qu’elle n’entendoit point a che qu’il disoit ... Yrions s’approche de ly, et quant elle le perchut, sy tressaly. ‘Belle nieche,’ fait Yrions, ‘a quoy pensés vous sy fort?’ ‘Sire,’ fait elle, ‘c’est a une canchonette que je faisoie; regardés s’elle est bien faite’.<sup>64</sup>

Witness also Alain Chartier’s description of a poet withdrawing into his room to compose in peace and quiet, thinking and playing with words, composing and deleting:

Et s’enfermë en chambre ou en retrait  
Pour escrire plus a l’aise et a trait  
De lettre close;  
Ung peu escript, puis songe et se repose,  
Puis efface pour mettre une autre chose ....<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> As Poirion points out, *Le Poète et le prince*, p. 433, ‘dans un seul poème Machaut a utilisé plus de rimes que le prince [Charles d’Orléans] dans toutes ses ballades (soixante-douze rimes différentes)’.

<sup>63</sup> *Les poésies complètes du chevalier poète Jean de Garancières ...*, ed. by Y. A. Neal (Paris: Fournier et Constans, 1953), ballade 25-B.

<sup>64</sup> Ed. by André Giacchetti (Rouen: Publications de l’Université de Rouen, 1989), p. 105.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Le Debat des Deux Fortunés d’Amour’, ll. 322-27, ed. by James Laidlaw in *The Poetical Works of Alain Chartier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). p. 167. Machaut too insists on

Witness finally Christine de Pizan congratulating the duke of Bourbon, with flattering surprise, on his remarkable poetic proficiency, in ways which, even allowing for flattery, seem to mean that the Duke would be pleased to have his verses thought of as expert and polished:

Qui vous en a tant appris,  
Noble duc des Bourbonnoiz,  
Des gracieux esbanoiz  
Qui sont en dicter compris ...<sup>66</sup>

The suggestion, here, is that it is worthwhile to play the game, to equip oneself with the habitus which allows one to know and recognize ‘the immanent laws of the game, the stakes and so on’,<sup>67</sup> worthwhile to master and internalize the set of tacit rules which govern strategies and practice in the field, and worthwhile to expend time and effort on producing a poem able to shine.

Creative competence, then, is a skill which it is profitable to acquire; the development of poetic techniques is thought sufficiently valuable to be worth pursuing at some material cost and with some time and effort. But how is this to be achieved? There is, at the end of the Middle Ages and especially in the fifteenth century, a remarkable proliferation of what their editor, Ernest Langlois, calls *arts de seconde*

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the need for quiet and concentration: see his *Prologue*, ll. 37-40: ‘quant je suis en ce penser, Je ne porroie a riens penser Fors que seulement au propos Dont faire dit ou chant propos.’ (Guillaume de Machaut, *Oeuvres*, ed. by Ernest Hoepffner, SATF, 3 vols (Paris, 1908-1921), I, p. 7)

<sup>66</sup> *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. Roy, I, p. 277. C. f. the hero of Machaut’s *Remede de Fortune* who ‘qualifies’ himself for love with poetry: ‘Et pour ce que n’estoie mie Tousdis en un point, *m’estudie* Mis en faire chansons et lays, Baladez, rondeaus, virelays, Et chans, selonc mon sentement, Amoureux et non autrement’ (*Le Jugement du roy de Behaigne and Remede de Fortune*, ed. by James I. Wimsatt and W. W. Kibler (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), ll. 401-06).

<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, p. 88.

*rhétorique*. Langlois edits and examines no fewer than seven of these treatises,<sup>68</sup> to which number we might add Eustache Deschamps' *Art de dictier* of 1392,<sup>69</sup> *L'Instructif de seconde rhétorique*, to which I return in chapter 4, and perhaps Pierre Fabri's *Grand et vrai art de pleine rhétorique* of c. 1521.<sup>70</sup> Critics over the years have found them distinctly disappointing: Deschamps' treatise does not, says Glending Olson repressively, and rightly, give us 'a complete view of literature' ...<sup>71</sup> True, the authors themselves mislead: the word 'rhetoric' may well have suggested something more ambitious than the actuality: this is, says treatise no. IV, a 'moderne *rhétorique laie*'; a '*rhétorique vulgaire*', says Molinet, a '*rhétorique vulgaire et maternelle*', says treatise no. VII.<sup>72</sup> But it is the adjectives to which we might pay attention, because they define the readership: a readership with no particular pretensions to learning (the meaning of *laie* and *vulgaire*), a readership which has to rely on its mother tongue (*maternelle*).

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68 In his *Recueil d'arts de seconde rhétorique* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1902; repr. Geneva: Slatkine, 1974). The generic title derives from the remark that poetry 'est dicte seconde rhethorique pour cause que la premiere est prosayque' (pp. 11, 65).

69 Ed. and trans. by Deborah Sinnreich-Levi (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1994) (replacing the edition in Deschamps' *Oeuvres complètes*, VII, pp. 266-92).

70 *Le grand et vrai Art de pleine rhétorique, de Pierre Fabri*, ed. by Héron.

71 'Deschamps' *Art de Dictier* and Chaucer's Literary Environment', *Speculum*, 48 (1973), 714-23 (p. 721). For a more nuanced and positive view, see Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, ch. XII: 'Les procédés de rhétorique et la valeur lyrique du langage', pp. 457-80, and Claude Thiry's excellent 'Prospections et prospectives sur la Rhétorique seconde', *Le Moyen français*, 46-7 (2000), 541-62, and 'Rhétorique et genres littéraires au XVe siècle', in *Sémantique lexicale et sémantique grammaticale en moyen français: Actes du Colloque organisé par le Centre d'études linguistiques et littéraires de la Vrije Universiteit Brussel* (28-29 sept. 1978), ed. by Marc Wilmet (Brussels: V.U.B. Centrum voor Taal- en Literatuurwetenschap, 1980), pp. 23-50: I would agree with the last, that 'il ne faut pas, comme on a parfois tendance à le faire, minimiser l'importance de ces premiers essais' (p. 27).

<sup>72</sup> *Recueil d'arts de seconde rhétorique*, pp. 203, 216, 265, respectively.

The editor of the majority of these treatises, Ernest Langlois, and more recently Claude Thiry,<sup>73</sup> see them as handbooks for professionals training for successful competition at the *puys* of northern France; some do indeed suggest that such-and-such a bravado piece might be suitable for a *puy*,<sup>74</sup> some give instructions for the writing of every conceivable variety of verse form, often so complex as surely to defy the amateur,<sup>75</sup> and it does indeed seem unlikely that mere amateurs would have needed to know that to the suggested rhymes in *fonde* (an alarmingly unpromising list: *parfonde, une fonde, garde qu'il ne fonde, morfonde, confonde, chastel que l'on fonde [...]*, to which they can, *a ung besoing*, add *ung grosse unde de mer, iave qui sourunde, blonde, faconde, une aronde ...*).<sup>76</sup> But it is important not to homogenize the treatises; they vary considerably in sophistication and technicality. Eustache Deschamps for instance defines his readership, by implication, when he declines to explain how to write a *sirventois* because 'c'est ouvrage qui se porte aux puis d'Amours, et que nobles hommes n'ont pas acoustumé de ce faire',<sup>77</sup> and some of the treatises make claims which are unpretentious enough to suggest a readership of amateurs: one anonymous little treatise, for instance, existing in just one manuscript,

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<sup>73</sup> As indeed does Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, pp. 147-8.

<sup>74</sup> Treatise no. II, for instance (see p. 21), or Baudet Herenc, the writer of treatise no. III (see pp. 179, 172, 175 etc).

<sup>75</sup> See for instance treatise no. VII, ed. by Langlois, pp. 265-426.

<sup>76</sup> All from treatise no. III, Baudet Harenc's *Doctrinal de la seconde rhétorique*, *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>77</sup> Deschamps, *Art de dictier*, ed. by Sinnreich-Levi, p. 82; Eustache seems to have written his treatise for the Louis d'Orléans who was the poetic champion of *Le Pastoralet*; see Miren Lacassagne, 'L'Art de dictier: Poetics of a "New" Time', in *Eustache Deschamps, French Courtier-Poet: His Work and his World*, ed. by Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 181-93. On the other hand, Eustache seems himself to have been an habitué of *puys*: c.f. his remarks about *musique naturelle* at *puys*, *ibid.*, pp. 64-6.

claims merely to have been written for *ung [s]ien ami*, 'pour aprendre a rimer',<sup>78</sup> Jean Molinet claims to have been asked to compose his treatise for his *trés honoré seigneur*, to enable him to win over his *partie adverse et obtenir d'elle victore glorieuse*,<sup>79</sup> and another, sympathetically, as if recognising how daunting an amateur might find the whole prospect of versifying, concedes that 'il gist grand advis a nombrer ses silabes et a congnoistre quant ses vers sont egaulx',<sup>80</sup> before going on to explain, rather less than clearly, how to treat feminine e correctly. It is surely also suggestive that the writer whom Langlois calls the *Anonyme lorrain* (treatise IV) confines himself to the two fixed-forms which we have already seen and which, as we shall discover, are the staples of aristocratic courts, the rondeau and ballade; that Jacques Legrand would add to these only the relatively restrained verse-forms, the *serventois* and the *lai* that we find Froissart, for instance, using (and which the poets of the *Cour amoureuse* were thought capable of composing), and deliberately ignores more flashy instances: 'non obstant que les dites manieres de dicter soient bonnes et souffisantes, neantmoins pluseurs autres manieres on pourroit deviser ....'<sup>81</sup>

Combined, these remarks suggest that it is as unwise to go to all the treatises for training for the highly sophisticated *puy* as to go to them all for abstract,

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78 Treatise no. VI, pp. 253-64, and his ballade CCCLV.

79 Treatise no. V, ed. by Langlois, p. 214, and c.f. in Treatise VI, the explicit: 'Je n'ay fait ce traictiét se non Pour aprendre ung mien amy' (ibid., p. 264).

80 From treatise no. I, Jacques Legrand's, p. 2, also ed. as *Archiloge Sophie: Livre de bonnes meurs*, ed. by Evencio Beltran (Paris: Champion, 1986), p. 141. One of Watrquet de Couvin's *dits*, the 'Dit de l'arbre royal' (ll. 8-13), suggests the anxieties of the amateur poet: 'Si fis ma priere en latin A Dieus et à sa douce mere Que il me moustrassent matere, Par aucuns signes ou par letre, Que je peüsse en rime metre Et conter devant les haus hommes'; *Dits*, ed. by A. Scheler.

81 Ed. by Beltran, p. 144.

philosophically-oriented discussion of the nature of poetry; I take as my watchword a comment made in a recent, more sympathetic, study, by Eric Méchoulan, that the treatises are ‘des recettes pour composer différentes sorts de poèmes’.<sup>82</sup> Most of them seem to have had a fairly limited circulation: three exist in single manuscripts, and even the more widely-distributed in only a handful: Jacques Legrand’s, which is a part of what was to have been a much more ambitious project,<sup>83</sup> appears in only four,<sup>84</sup> Jean Molinet’s *Art de rhétorique* in no more than three.<sup>85</sup> But to read with more attention is to understand that some of them at least may be designed to respond to quite practical and immediate demands, and to provide a panacea for precisely the sort of anxieties which even an amateur might express: a panacea which would ensure what I earlier called ‘creative competence’. Treatise no. VII, for instance, gives the broadest range of rhyme-words that the author can devise: ‘en quoy on pourra *facillement* arenger et coucher ses termes de ryme très richement, et trouver, se

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82 ‘Les arts de rhétorique du XVe siècle: la Théorie, masque de la *theoria*’, in *Masques et déguisements dans la littérature médiévale*, ed. by Marie-Louise Ollier (Montreal: Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1988), pp. 213-21 (213); see also M.-R. Jung, ‘Poetria: Zur Dichtungstheorie des ausgehenden Mittelalters in Frankreich’, *Vox Romanica*, 30 (1971), 44-64, and c.f. Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, pp. 457-65 and François Cornilliat, *Or ne mens: couleurs de l’éloge et du blâme chez les ‘Grands Rhétoriciens’* (Paris: Champion, 1994), pp. 27-84.

<sup>83</sup> Legrand’s original intention was for a much more ambitious treatise, on all seven liberal arts: see Serge Lusignan, ‘Jacques Legrand auteur du premier traité du *Trivium* en français’ in his *Parler vulgairement: les intellectuels et la langue française aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Paris: Vrin, Montreal: Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1986), pp. 173-84.

84 Ed. by Langlois, pp. 1-10, ed. by Beltran, *Archiloge Sophie*, pp. 1-9; on the manuscript tradition, see the latter, pp. 16-19.

<sup>85</sup> BNF fr. 2159; BNF, fr. 2375; Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 187: 220 CHECK THIS, ADRIAN; there were also eight printed editions as from 1493.

*besoing est, equivocques en composant*’;<sup>86</sup> treatise no. II supplies a handlist of mythological figures, with explanations, so that a would-be poet can use them to find apt allusions and avoid making a fool of himself by getting the frame of reference wrong: ‘d’aucunes sont mises leurs figures ainsi qu’il s’ensuit, *affin de ne mettre et attribuer leurs faits a aultres*, et pour faire diz, lays ou ballades ou rommans’;<sup>87</sup> treatise no. IV gives an elementary, and rather laborious, explanation of just what is meant by ‘rhyme’: ‘Rimer *n’est autre chose* que faire deux bastons [lines] finer par telle lettre ... Et que plus ressembleront l’un l’autre en la fin, millieur sera la rime’;<sup>88</sup> treatise no. II, oddly at first sight, gives handlists of words arranged alphabetically (‘ba, be, bi, bo, bu .... baude, belle, bien, boute, bulle’), ‘pour aprendre a espelir toutes paroles’.<sup>89</sup> The overall impression, here, is surely not of a set of treatises all designed for the professional who might want to put a final polish to his already considerable skills; the phrases that I have underlined are encouraging, just what an amateur slightly alarmed by the prospect of composing a rondeau or a ballade might have found reassuring.<sup>90</sup> What I am suggesting, in other words, is that a number of these treatises may be best

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86 Ed. by Langlois, p. 322.

87 Ed. by Langlois, p. 39; this is from another anonymous treatise, probably Picard, no. II, *Les règles de la seconde rhétorique*, now a single manuscript. It gives a more extensive list, of *noms de poetes, de dieux, de deesses, de philosophes, de patriarches et de magiciens* (pp. 65-72): this too is a sort of crib-sheet (‘Par Amphitryon est entendu bonnes meurs. Par Almena [Alcmena] est entendue pulchritude, laquelle vaut autant a dire que beauté’ (p. 65)).

88 Ed. by Langlois, p. 201.

89 Ed. by Langlois, p. 36. The treatise is confusingly written; the writer seems to have made notes randomly, with no thought for order.

90 I return later to the patrons to whom copies of these treatises were presented; it is, however, worth noting that it was Charles d’Orléans’ father, Louis, who commissioned Eustache Deschamps to write his *Art de dictier* (see ed. by Sinnreich-Levi).



understood as designed not, or not only, for poets or for advanced thinkers on rhetoric, but as handbooks for the amateur, the court poet; his or her means to cultural capital and to success in the chosen field. It is perfectly possible to see these treatises precisely as the recipe-books that Méchoulan calls them:<sup>91</sup> a reader thus armed with a rhyming dictionary, a handbook of classical mythology, and a few tidy templates for a correct rondeau or ballade, could turn him- or herself, without too great difficulty, into a competent, if unexciting, versifier.

To return for a moment to one of the *dits* with which I began this chapter, the *Pastoralet*: this is surely something that is adumbrated in the depiction of the pastoral rondeau-competition. The amateur shepherd-poets, we remember, sedulously showcased a range of different poetic skills. The first, Charles VI, produced a rondeau with one single selling-point: the *rime riche* *Tulle/entulle* – and there, conveniently listed in treatise no. VII under the rubric *Feminins termes en ULLE*, is indeed *tulle* (though not, disappointingly, *entulles*.<sup>92</sup> The second and third poets, the duke of Burgundy and ‘Lupal’, gave us strings of allusions – and there, providently supplied with the necessary details, are the lists from treatise no. II: Orpheus and Zephyrus, Pygmalion and Paris ...<sup>93</sup> The fourth of the poets, of course, made his pitch out of an alphabet game – and is it not conceivable that those rather odd lists of words, all beginning with the same vowel or consonant and by which their author says he intended to teach his readers how to spell, might have been a prompt to just such a game? I am not, of course, for a moment suggesting that the author or the poets of the *Pastoralet* read

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<sup>91</sup> See above, note XXXX.

<sup>92</sup> Treatise no. VII, ed. by Langlois, p. 357.

<sup>93</sup> Ed. by Langlois, pp. 39-48.

any one of the particular treatises published by Langlois – and indeed it would be speculation even to suggest that any of them might have depended on some lost treatise.<sup>94</sup> What I do want to suggest is that the coincidence between the court poets competing over poetic devices of greater or lesser complexity, and the proliferation of treatises explaining in painstaking detail how to rhyme, or how to construct a simple ballade or rondeau, may be a demonstration of the social and cultural value attached to production of verse in a court environment.

Here again, the treatises are valuable evidence as to the investment, in time and effort, that it might be proper to put into verse. Matters of correct versification are, says Jacques Legrand (treatise no. I), much discussed: ‘opinion commune’, ‘dient aucuns’;<sup>95</sup> there is, in other words, a discourse about poetry and how to write and perform it. It is, says the Anonyme Lorrain (treatise no. IV), eminently worthwhile to frequent established poets to pick up the tricks of their trade: ‘pour sçavoir l’usage de moderne retorique laie, je conseille a user et hanter les facteurs [de] ballades et rondel, car en cest art y falt mettre moult usage’;<sup>96</sup> a provident poet will, in other words, be prepared to invest, time-consumingly, in honing his talent (‘mettre *moult* usage’). To acquire expertise in the manipulation of poetic form is therefore a *strategy*: one which can lead to social (or of course pecuniary) advancement, and therefore one for which it is eminently worth planning; particular sorts of verbal dexterity and

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94 Although, of course, the fact that so many survive in single manuscripts suggests that they were never designed for circulation beyond a single court or patron.

95 Ed. by Beltran, pp. 141, 143. Langlois, *Recueil*, introduction assumes that Legrand is talking about written discussions, ‘des opinions qu’il aurait rencontrées au cours de ses lectures’ (p. v). but even if this is so, it suggests a remarkable proliferation of *arts de rhétorique*.

96 Ed. by Langlois, p. 203.

deftness are recognized as the specific skills – power-bids – with which a courtier-poet might acquire symbolic capital.

It is, I think, interesting in this context to look at a second means of inculcating poetic technique which is oddly prevalent in the fictions of the late Middle Ages and which is more evidence of the seriousness of poetry: we might call it apprenticeship, and it is related to what the Anonyme Lorrain said, above, about the usefulness of frequenting *les facteurs [de] ballades et rondel*. Guillaume de Machaut's *Livre du Voir Dit*<sup>97</sup> is the story of a highly literary courtship. The poet, ageing,<sup>98</sup> dispirited, receives a message from an aristocratic young lady unknown to him but who is an ardent admirer of his lyrics. They begin a correspondence in which, along with protestations of his devotion, Guillaume sends her finished verses, often set to his own music, and in which she sends him, from time to time, lyrics of her own.<sup>99</sup> My reason for mentioning this romance is the terms in which she sends him her own literary productions:

Et sur ce je vous envoie un virelay lequel j'ay fait; et se yl y a aucune chose a amender, si le veuillez faire, car j'ai trop petit engien pour bien faire une tele besongne. Et aussi ne eu je unques qui rien m'en aprist; pour quoy je vous pri, treschiers amis, qu'il vous plaise a moy envoyer de vos livres et de vos dis, par quoy je puisse tenir de vous a faire de vos bons dis et de bonnes chansons, quar c'est le plus grant esbatement que je aie que de oïr et de chanter bons dis et bonnes chansons, se je le savoie bien faire. Et quant il plaira a Dieu que je

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97 Ed. by Paul Imbs et al., *Lettres Gothiques* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1999).

98 'Je sui petis, rudes et nyses et desapris' (p. 150); Jacqueline Cerquiglini points out that this is a common stance for late-medieval poets: see 'Le clerc et le louche: Sociology of an Esthetic', *Poetics Today*, 5 (1984), 479-91.

99 The question as to whether Peronnette is 'real' is a knotty one: see most intriguingly the computer-generated comparison in Noël Musso, 'Comparaison statistique des lettres de Guillaume de Machaut et de Peronne d'Armentière dans le *Voir-Dit*', in *Guillaume de Machaut, poète et compositeur. Actes du Colloque table-ronde organise par l'Université de Reims (19-22 avril 1978)* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1982), pp. 179-93.

vous voie ..., s'il vous plaist, vous les m'aprenrez a mieulz faire et dire; quar je en aprenroie plus de vous en un jour que je ne feroie d'un autre en .I an.<sup>100</sup>

Of course, this is nicely self-serving: the elderly Machaut is presenting himself as a poet so expert, so admired, that a beautiful young woman of noble birth institutes a poetic correspondance with him largely in order to have him correct her verses. And we should no doubt be wary of supposing that what is a piece of fiction has a necessary connection with historical reality.<sup>101</sup> But I have quoted this passage at such length because it is so circumstantial, and because it brings out, with remarkable clarity, just what I meant by *apprenticeship*. Toute Belle, the lady in question, is noble, and self-deprecating: she lacks the skill (*engien*) to perfect a poem written in one of the more complex and more ambitious metres used by amateurs, a *virelai*.<sup>102</sup> But this is because she is untutored: she has never had anyone to teach her. And so she begs Machaut to send her examples of his work – *de vos livres et de vos dis* – precisely so that she can use them as models. And she finishes by hoping that, when they meet, Machaut will consent (condescend?) to give her face-to-face tuition in the art of poetry. Over and over again, as the *Voir Dit* continues, Toute Belle makes similar requests, more or less specific. She sends Machaut a rondeau and begs him to make corrections to it – and to write a *virelai* on the same theme as a model (p. 72); Machaut

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100 Ed. by Imbs et al., pp. 94-6.

101 Everyone who works on the *Voir Dit* agrees that distinguishing 'truth' from 'fiction' in the romance is an impossibility; see Jacqueline Cerquiglini, '*Un engin si subtil*': *Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIVe siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1985), and c.f. my 'Machaut's *Livre du Voir Dit* and the Poetics of the Title', in '*Et c'est la fin pour quoy sommes ensemble*'. *Hommage à Jean Dufournet*, ed. by Jean-Claude Aubailly, Emmanuèle Baumgartner and Francis Dubost (Paris: Champion, 1993), pp. 1351-62.

102 On which see Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, pp. 343-48.

is to complete her verses – she has been so discouraged (*elles* [sc: Machaut's lyrics] *m'esbahissent toute*; see above p. XXXX) by the excellence of his that she has managed no more than a single stanza – and amend them so that they can be sung to one of his melodies (p. 140). In return, Machaut promises that if he can spend a mere day with her, 'je vous diroie et apenroie ce que je n'apris onques a creature, par quoy vous les feriés mieulz' (p. 154). Again and again,<sup>103</sup> we find the would-be poets of the end of the Middle Ages soliciting the advice of more experienced or more expert poets: there is a disingenuous little rondeau, for instance, in one of the manuscripts on which I shall expand in chapter 3, BNF fr. 9223, from Antoine de Cuise to Blosseville, asking him to turn his *fatraz* into something neatly professional ('ung tour de mestier'<sup>104</sup>):

Blosseville, noble escuier,  
Tous ces fatraz je vous envoie,  
Ce non obstant que chacun voye  
Que ne sont pas de main d'ouvrier.

D'amender ilz ont bien mestier [...]  
Avant qu'ilz aillent aultre voye,  
Donnez leur ung tour de mestier,  
Blosseville, noble escuier.<sup>105</sup>

All of which, by implication, suggests that the habitus of the would-be successful courtier can be enriched not just by following the prescriptions of poetical handbooks, not just by rigorous training and practice, but by the advice and patronage of the

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<sup>103</sup> C.f. Christine de Pizan's so-called Queen's Manuscript, London, BL Harley 4431 (see below), there is a set of verses labelled 'Item, une assemblee de plusieurs rimes toutes leonnines en façon de lay a qui vouldroit apprendre a rimer leonninement' (fol. 1<sup>v</sup>; my italics).

<sup>104</sup> An interesting expression: the amateur Blosseville is invited to provide a professional *tour de mestier*, an expression relating to manual trades – as indeed does *main d'ouvrier*.

<sup>105</sup> *Rondeaux et autres poésies du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. by Gaston Raynaud, SATF (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1889), no. CXXIII. Blosseville demurs, tactfully: 'Je ne suis pas tant abusé Que de me vouloir entremestre De corriger les faiz du maistre Qui est du mestier tant rusé' (ibid., no. CXXIV).

already expert: that the individual habitus, in other words, benefits from social relations and their management.<sup>106</sup>

But of course what is required is also recognition: if poetic skill is to constitute poetic capital, then there has to be a cultivated, poetically astute audience and readership, and one which values successful poetic enterprise. We have already seen, in the case of both the *Cour amoureuse* and *Le Parfait du Paon*, that audiences were indeed responsive and not it seems, and contrary to modern impressions, indiscriminating, and that judges may have been perfectly capable of realizing when a poet had tried to slip in a cheville, or to hide an extra syllable. The point is widely made. Froissart, for instance, pictures himself, again in the *Prison amoureuse*, as operating in a court environment in which a quite finicky connoisseurship is to be expected; before he releases one of his *virelais* into the public domain, he needs to check it over for any slightest error because it will, inevitably, be picked up by his fellow-poets:

Ordonnai en bonne maniere  
Le virelay et escripsi.  
Quant je l'eus fait, je le lisi  
Pour amender et corrigier,  
Par quoi d'Adam ne de Rogier,  
Ne de tous chiaus qui d'aviser  
Se mellent et de deviser,  
Je n'en peuïsse estre repris.<sup>107</sup>

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106 Froissart also presents his pseudo-I as a mentor and patron to younger poets: in the *Prison amoureuse* (for which, true, the *Voir Dit* is a model) he claims to have been asked to check over his verses for Rose (= Froissart's patron, the Duke of Brabant): 'la ou mon petit conseil vous pora aidier et valoir, je sui appareilliés dou faire. J'ai diliganment regardé et viseté vestres lettres ... Si vous di par maniere d'avis que vous voelliés perseverer selonc le commencement que vous avés, qui est grans et biaux' (ed. Anthime Fourrier (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974), p. 73).

107 Ibid, ll. 1002-09.

Machaut claims, in the *Voir Dit*, to have been instantly impressed by a rondeau that 'n'estoit pas rudes ne let, N'il n'estoit mie contrefais [it did not break any of the rules of prosody]'.<sup>108</sup>

Froissart and Machaut of course are professionals: what Cerquiglini-Toulet calls *clerics-poètes*,<sup>109</sup> who naturally call upon a discriminating, perceptive and demanding audience, one perfectly, painfully, aware of lyric conventions and grammatical and lexical rules.<sup>110</sup> What is interesting is to recognize just how discriminating an amateur audience might also have been. Let me return, for a final time, to the little competition in the *Parfait du Paon*. Clarete's ballade, we remember (see above, p. XXXX), was unanimously chosen as the winner, because it was *la mix ouvree*; this salute to linguistic and rhetorical sophistication suggests at least one of the criteria by which a poem's excellence might be judged: *worked-ness*, syntactic and prosodic ingenuity – and, realistically or not, Jean de Le Mote thought it perfectly plausible that amateurs would have recognized such qualities as easily as the professional poets whose good opinions, as we saw, are canvassed by Machaut or Froissart. But it would be reductive to imply that prosodic and syntactic sophistication are the only strategies available to achieve social and cultural success. It is true that responses to particular poems are often dispiritingly bland: Froissart's *Meliador*, to return to a text which is a repository of lyric, would seem to suggest lack of discrimination, since every ballade or rondeau is

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108 Ed. by Imbs et al., p. 52, ll. 184-5.

109 *La Couleur de la mélancolie*; cf. Tietz's distinction between amateur and professional poets, 'Die französische Lyrik'.

110 As Robert Guiette argues in his 'D'une poésie formelle en France au moyen âge', *Revue des sciences humaines* (1949; repr. Paris: Nizet, 1972), pp. 61-8.

*gente*, or *bel et joli*, or *friche*, or *belle et gracieuse*.<sup>111</sup> But once again, reading with care, we find passing comments which suggest a certain artistic fastidiousness which has to do not just with the manipulation of words, but also with meaning and emotion. A major criterion – and this may come as a surprise to those who still subscribe to the belief that medieval fixed-form lyrics are so tediously repetitive and unoriginal that they can only be redeemed by being set to music<sup>112</sup> – is what Pierre Fabri calls *invention*: ‘Combien que plusieurs conditions soient requises a ung facteur [poet], *la principale c’est inuention*, car sans inuention subtile, plaisante et nouvelle, le facteur ne sçaura deduire sa matiere plaisante ou utile’.<sup>113</sup> The three adjectives here – *subtile*, *plaisante* et *nouvelle* – seem colourless enough, but they are worth examining,<sup>114</sup> and

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111 See for instance ll. 14,007, 14,796, 15,672, 18,344 ... We must allow for flattery: *Meliador* recycles poems by a patron, Wenceslas of Bavaria, and Froissart has a vested interest, precisely in Bourdieudian terms, in singing his praises ...

112 C.f. C. S. Lewis, who talks of the medieval poet's *abdication of originality* (see *The Discarded Image: an introduction to medieval and renaissance literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 211). I agree with John E. Stevens (*Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor court* (London: Methuen, 1961)), who maintains that the idea that music is what gives the barren, monotonous late-medieval lyric its point ‘rests on mistaken assumptions about the place of music in social life’ (p. 150).

113 *Le grand et vrai Art*, I, p. 18; my italics. On *invention* and its importance, see Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, *La Couleur de la mélancolie*, pp. 107 ff.; idem, ‘Cadmus ou Carmenta. Réflexion sur le concept d’invention à la fin du Moyen Age’, in *What is Literature? France 1100-1600*, ed. by François Cornilliat, Ullrich Langer, and Douglas Kelly (Lexington, KT: French Forum, 1993), pp. 211-30. C.f. Ernstpeter Ruhe, ‘*Inventio* devenue *troevemens*: la recherche de la matière au Moyen Age’ in *The Spirit of the Court: Selected Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society (Toronto 1983)*, ed. by G. Burgess (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985), pp. 289-97.

114 To be *plaisante* is fundamental: to return to the *Parfait du Paon*, even though Saigremore's vocabulary is not especially elevated (*pas haut*), her poem is *bien plaisant* (1423). To be *subtile* is more complex; see Kelly, *Medieval Imagination*, pp. 2-12.



particularly the last which is, of course, familiar from what has already been said: one of the knights in Froissart's *Meliador* was inspired by *sentemens noviaus*; the I-narrator of Froissart's *Prison amoureuse* had to ransom his purse of love-letters with *la plus nouvelle canchon*.<sup>115</sup> Now, Froissart embroiders on this question of newness, novelty, elsewhere in the *Prison amoureuse*. The narrator tells us that love inspired him to *faire et chanter a virelai*.<sup>116</sup> He is rather proud of the result – precisely, of its *nouveleté*:

Nouveletés gaires ne gist  
Ne ne sejourne ne repose:  
Elle est tele que par tout s'ose  
Hardiement mettre ou embatre  
Pour gens couroucier ou esbatre,  
Car elle a tant de signourie,  
– En ce point l'avons nous nourie, –  
Que joie ou courous renouvelle.<sup>117</sup>

*Nouveleté*, here, seems to have to do with an emotional charge which provokes the poet into words, and which, because it is new or provocative, will transmit itself to the reader or hearer: the implication is that a poet should be permanently open to new sensations ('*Nouveleté ... ne repose*'),<sup>118</sup> that poems are most successful if they are

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115 On 'nouvelleté' in late-medieval lyric, see especially Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, pp. 257-9, and Paul Zumthor, *Le Masque et la lumière*, pp. 17-22. On the lyrics of Froissart's *Meliador* and their *nouvelleté*, see Kelly, *Medieval Imagination*, pp. 243-53.

116 As the editor points out, *Prison amoureuse*, p. 32, the *virelai*, for Froissart, consists of two stanzas of an 'extrême variété des schémas métriques'; c.f. Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, pp. 326-33, 343-60, and Georges Lote, *Histoire du vers français, première partie: Le Moyen Age*, 3 vols (Paris: Boivin, Hatier, 1949-1955), II, pp. 264-66.

117 *Prison amoureuse*, II. 328-35.

118 On the anxiety of 'nouvelleté' see Watriquet de Couvin: 'Si fis ma priere en latin A Dieus et à sa douce mere, Que il me moustrassent matere, Par aucuns signes ou par letre, Que je peüsse en rime metre Et conter devant les haus hommes' (*Dit de l'arbre royal*, II. 8-13) (*Dits*, ed. Scheler).

heartfelt, and that it is the unexpected which will most impress. Poets are, as Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet says,<sup>119</sup> anxious as to where *nouveleté* is to come from: Martin le Franc, dispiritingly, thinks that all that is left is to gloss other people's novelties:

Item, on a fait tant de choses  
Qu'on ne scet mais a quoy muser.  
On a fait textes, or a gloses  
Composer fault le temps user.<sup>120</sup>

A premium, therefore, attaches to the new, the exciting: ingenuity and invention, linguistic and creative competences, are commodities in a refined, sophisticated court environment – commodities which will, it seems, be crowned with success for the amateur as well as for the professional.

What then is to happen to those pieces which receive the acclamation of the court? Some of the best evidence, perhaps, of the prestige attached to poetry is an element which, we saw, was important to Pierre de Hauteville and the devisers of the *Cour amoureuse*, and to which I now propose to turn: the care and thought which is devoted to its presentation and preservation. Pierre, we remember, made specific provision for the preservation of the winning compositions: they were to be carefully copied into *registres*, which were in turn to be confided to the safekeeping of an *abbeye*. None of them survives, if indeed they ever existed, so that we cannot know if anyone ever took advantage of this provision – but the mere fact that those who devised the statutes felt that the material presentation and safekeeping of the *registres* was so important is

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<sup>119</sup> In a chapter entitled *La tristesse du 'déjà dit'* in *La Couleur de la mélancolie*, pp. 57-88.

<sup>120</sup> *Le Champion des dames*, ed. by Robert Deschaux, CFMA, 5 vols (Paris: Champion, 1999), II. 16369-72.

revealing: a proper record of a poetic occasion demands a page that is carefully thought-out, ingenious, aesthetically pleasing.

I am not, of course, the first to draw attention to the care with which poets in the late Middle Ages describe the shifts to which they are put – the *mise en page*, the planning, the sheer expense – to ensure that their verses are properly preserved and presented;<sup>121</sup> as Froissart says, with considerable self-congratulation, of the volume which, as we saw, he offered to Richard II, it was, ‘un très-beau livre et bien adourné, couvert de velours, garny et cloué de clous d’argent dorés d’or’.<sup>122</sup> His fictional volumes are luxury objects of just this sort: Rose’s volume of verse, in the *Prison amoureuse*, is a ‘bel et plaisant livre Envolepé de kamoukas [‘silk’]’<sup>123</sup> – and the ‘I’ of the poem keeps the leaves on which he copies his poems ‘en une laiette Que j’avoie proprement fete De danemarce bien ounie [‘unblemished, flawless Danish leather’]’.<sup>124</sup> For Machaut, too, the preservation and presentation of poems is a priority: he returns to Toute-Belle the *laiette* that she had lent him, with all the poems it contains now carefully ordered (‘tout est mis par ordre dedens vostre livre’);<sup>125</sup> he estimates, with

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121 See Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, ‘Quand la voix s’est tue: La mise en recueil de la poésie lyrique aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles’, in *La Présentation du livre. Actes du colloque de Paris X-Nanterre (4, 5, 6 décembre 1985)*, ed. by E. Baumgartner and N. Boulestreau (Nanterre: Centre de recherches du Département de français de Paris X-Nanterre, 1987), pp. 313-27, and idem, ‘Fullness and Emptiness: Shortages and Storehouses of Lyric Treasure in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries’, in *Contexts: Style and Values in Medieval Art and Literature*, ed. by Daniel Poirion and Nancy Freeman Regalado, *Yale French Studies*, special issue (New Haven, 1991), pp. 224-39.

122 Loc. cit.; see above, p. XXXX.

123 *Prison amoureuse*, ll. 2221-2.

124 Ibid., ll. 1248-50.

125 Ed. by Paul Imbs et al., pp. 522-24, letter xxxi.

careful, professional accuracy, the number of leaves his collected poems are likely to take: ‘.XII coiers de .XL. pions’.<sup>126</sup> Machaut is, in fact, the consummate professional, conscious of the parameters within which his work must be set in order to appeal to a patron or a sponsor: his collected work, his *livre*, which is, he says on one occasion in the *Voir Dit*, still in twenty *pieces*, still awaiting the musical notation before it can be completed.<sup>127</sup> He, like other late-medieval French poets, was moreover concerned not just with the material presentation of his lyrics, but also with their contextualization, that is, that they should be presented in ways which respected their sense and their sequence. His *Voir Dit* and his *Remede de Fortune* ensure this by weaving the fixed-form lyrics into the very fabric of fiction, and thus by anchoring them to a particular disposition; his initiative was followed by Christine de Pizan, for instance, with her *Cent Ballades* and *Cent Ballades d’amant et de dame*, and also arguably by François Villon in his *Testament*.<sup>128</sup> These ‘professional’ poets all regard ease and fluency in the production and ‘performance’ of verse as a mark of success in cultural and social

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126 Ed. by Paul Imbs et al., p. 770-22. On Machaut’s professionalism and care for presentation, see Jacqueline Cerquiglini, ‘*Un engin si subtil*’, pp. 211-21, and Sarah Jane Williams, ‘An Author’s Role in Fourteenth-Century Book Production: Guillaume de Machaut’s “livre ou je met toutes mes choses”’, *Romania*, 90 (1969), 433-54 (but note Lawrence Earp’s timely warning, that we ought not to overstate the authority of this particular manuscript: see his ‘Machaut’s Role in the Production of Manuscripts of His Works’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 42 (1989), 461-503).

127 Ed. by Imbs et al., p. 188.

<sup>128</sup> See for instance Sylvia Huot, ‘From Life to Art: The Lyric Anthology of Villon’s Testament’, in *The Ladder of High Design: Structure and Interpretation of the French Lyric Sequence*, ed. by Doranne Fenoaltea and David Lee Rubin (Charlottesville, VI: University Press of Virginia, 1991), pp. 26-40; Nancy Freeman Regalado, ‘Gathering the Works: The ‘Œuvres de Villon’ and the Intergeneric Passage of the Medieval French Lyric into Single-Author Collections’, *Esprit Créateur*, 33 (1993), 87-100.

terms; this ease and fluency, this elegance, this *habitus*, must be preserved so as to be made visible beyond the bounds of some particular occasion, and fictions, conscious of this need, specialize in what, in my Introduction, I called *récits de publication*. What I want to examine now, however, in rather more detail, is how this preservation is manifested not in pleasing fictions but in sober reality, in four highly contrasting volumes. I begin with the more prestigious variety of codex: first, a manuscript I have referred to before in the context of Christine de Pizan's *gieux a vendre*, her magnificent, costly presentation volume for Isabeau of Bavaria, now BL Harley 4431, and second, the huge volume of Eustache Deschamps' collected works, now BNF fr. 840. What I shall want to argue is that these measured, imposing volumes underline the benefit that might accrue from the lyric collection not just, and most obviously, to the poet's own self-presentation and hence ambitions, but also, perhaps, to the patron, via the advantage, the cultural capital, that he or she might expect to derive from a lyric manuscript designed, individually, specifically for his or her purposes.<sup>129</sup>

Let me start, then, by returning to the superb Queen's Manuscript that Christine designed for Isabeau of Bavaria.<sup>130</sup> Christine, of course, is among the most self-

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<sup>129</sup> For a wonderfully rich account of artistic patronage in the courts of the late Middle Ages, and especially Burgundy, see Jacques Lemaire, *Les visions de la vie de cour dans la littérature française à la fin du Moyen Age* (Brussels: Académie royale de langue et de littérature françaises, 1990), pp. 158-237.

<sup>130</sup> Christine was of course a consummate professional who insisted on regular presentation copies of her collected works: a notable example, somewhat earlier than the Queen's Manuscript, is the *Duke's Manuscript*, BNF fr. 835, 606, 836, 605, and perhaps 607, copied for the duc de Berry between 1405 and 1409; for details, see Laidlaw, 'Christine de Pizan – A Publisher's Progress', pp. 52-9.

conscious of medieval poets, and certainly the most openly conscious of the need to 'manage' her own works. By 'manage', here, I mean especially their presentation;<sup>131</sup> in *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*, she explains that having started by composing *choses jolies* and *legieres*, she graduated to *plus grant soubtilleté et plus haulte matiere*, and, concomitantly, to 'managing' her 'product':

depuis l'an mil .III<sup>c</sup>III<sup>xx</sup>. et .XIX. que je commençay jusques a cestui III<sup>c</sup>. et .V. ouquel encore je ne cesse, compillés en ce tendis .XV. volumes principaux sans les autres particuliers petis dictiez, lesquelz tout ensemble contiennent environ .LXX. quaiers de grant volume, comme l'experience en est manifeste.<sup>132</sup>

This is surely the true voice of the professional:<sup>133</sup> Christine's expert, exquisite scriptorial sensibility is acutely aware of what is needed materially to secure and ensure her position in the literary hierarchy: a literary hierarchy in which, it seems, she regards her fixed-form lyrics as a valuable asset. Each of her collected manuscripts affords a large place precisely to the fixed-form lyrics: to miscellaneous works to which she gives simple, generic titles ('Gieux a vendre', as we saw; 'Lais'; 'Complaintes amoureuses'; 'Rondeaux'; 'Virelais'),<sup>134</sup> and to groupings of lyrics to which she gives labels which impose a certain unity: 'Cent ballades'; 'Cent ballades d'amant et de dame'. The Queen's Manuscript is, however, particularly revelatory from the point of

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<sup>131</sup> On this, see Sylvie Lefèvre, 'Prologues de recueils et mise en oeuvre des textes: Robert de Blois, Christine de Pizan et Antoine de La Sale', in *Seuils de l'oeuvre dans le texte médiéval*, ed. by Emmanuèle Baumgartner and Laurence Harf-Lancner, 2 vols (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2002), II, pp. 89-114.

<sup>132</sup> Ed. by Reno and Dulac, p. 111.

<sup>133</sup> C.f. Machaut's casually expert remark in his *Voir-dit*, that a given work 'tenra environ .XII. coiers de .XL. poins': ed. by Imbs et al., p. 770 (on which see Williams, 'An Author's Role').

<sup>134</sup> Which, of course, are nothing unusual: cf. Machaut manuscripts such as BNF fr. 22545-6, where the poet's *oeuvre* is carefully classified generically: first narratives, then 'Complaintes', 'Lays', 'Balades notees', 'Rondeaulx', and 'Chançons baladees'.

view which primarily interests me here: in its paratextual emphasis on the importance of the book as material object studiously designed for its recipient.

The manuscript opens<sup>135</sup> (fig. 1) with a double-column miniature showing Christine presenting a large, beautifully-bound volume to a sumptuously gowned, furred and bejewelled Isabeau of Bavaria.<sup>136</sup> Isabeau is shown in the intimacy of a bedchamber hung with tapestries and embroidered hangings, sitting on a couch surrounded by her elegant ladies all wearing the very latest in elegant head-dresses: every detail flatters the Queen's status and wealth and taste.<sup>137</sup> Christine, by contrast, is austere and soberly dressed in a dark-blue gown and plain white head-dress – but, artistically and compositionally, she draws the observer's eye, partly precisely because she is so unostentatiously dressed, partly because the use of scale and perspective renders her disproportionately large (larger, indeed, than the Queen), and partly because she kneels at the forefront of the little scene, at its central vertical axis, and so dominates it.<sup>138</sup> By discreet implication, Christine is orchestrating this scene – as, she says, she has with equal care orchestrated the collected works which follow.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> As Hindman shows ('The Composition', p. 111), the leaf containing the miniature and the dedication-prologue occupy an inserted folio, 'a feature which ... suggests its later addition'.

<sup>136</sup> Reproduced, alas in black and white, in Hindman, 'The Composition', p. 94, and as a frontispiece in Roy, *Oeuvres*, III. On the miniatures in the Queen's Manuscript, see Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: the Limbourgs and their Contemporaries* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974). Hindman considers this miniature meshes so well with other evidence as to Isabeau's looks and dress, and as to the setting, that it may represent historical reality: see 'The Iconography of Queen Isabeau de Bavière [1410-1415]: An Essay in Method', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, série 6, 102 (1983), 102-10.

<sup>137</sup> On the function of presentation miniatures, see Dhira B. Mahoney, 'Courtly Presentation and Authorial Self-Fashioning: Frontispiece Miniatures in Late Medieval French and English Manuscripts', *Mediaevalia*, 21 (1996), 97-160 (esp. pp.108-13).

<sup>138</sup> For an art-historical view of this manuscript, see Hindman, 'The Composition'.

This is, she says, however unworthy – the familiar modesty topos – her own unaided and individual work: nothing, here, but what emerges from her *pensee pure*, written

ou stile que je detiens  
Du seul sentement que retiens  
Des dons de Dieu et de Nature...<sup>140</sup>

Christine has, as we saw (above, p. XXXX), deliberately varied the fare she will offer the Queen ('diverses matieres, Unes pesans, aultres legieres'); more particularly, once the order was received, she has made a point of selecting and organising (*ordener*) content she hopes the Queen will find attractive, and of supervising the volume itself.<sup>141</sup>

Si l'ay fait, ma dame, ordener,  
Depuis que je sceus que assener  
Le devoye a vous, si que ay sceu

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<sup>139</sup> Deborah McGrady argues, more controversially, that the point of Harley MS 4431 is the glorification of Christine herself. As she – rightly – points out, the codex consists of works largely dedicated to or commissioned by patrons other than Isabeau; she cannot therefore 'claim to be the inspiration, the subject, or the original recipient of the works found in the collection' ('What is a Patron? Benefactors and Authorship in Harley 4431, Christine de Pizan's Collected Works', in *Christine de Pizan and the Categories of Difference*, ed. by Marilyn Desmond (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 195-214 (p. 196)). The argument is not entirely convincing: the codex as a material object – as important as its contents – remains under the authority of the Queen by virtue simply of the prologue and the frontispiece. And even if certain of the booklets later incorporated into the codex were already in existence before they were incorporated into Harley 4431 (see Sandra Hindman, 'The Composition'), this is a commercially astute move which does not diminish the importance accorded to Queen.

<sup>140</sup> Prologue, ed. by Roy in *Oeuvres poétiques*, I, pp. xiv-xvii, ll. 20-22.

<sup>141</sup> On this aspect of Christine's prologue, see Sylvie Lefèvre, 'Prologues de recueils', Sandra Hindman, *Christine de Pizan's 'Epistre Othéa': Painting and Politics at the Court of Charles VI* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986), and Sylvia Huot, 'Lyric Poetics and the Art of Compilatio in the Fourteenth Century' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 1982), pp. 218-19.



Tout au mieulx, et le parfiner  
 D'escripre et bien enluminer,  
 Des que vo command en receu  
 Selon qu'en mon cuer j'ay conceu  
 Qu'il faloit des choses finer  
 Pour bien richement l'affiner,  
 Affin que fust apperceü  
 Que je mets povoir, force et sceu  
 Pour vos bon vueil enteriner.<sup>142</sup>

She has attended to the process of copying and illumination; she has ensured that the volume has been finished *bien richement* – and she has done this so meticulously because order, materials, richness are an index of how obediently and entirely she has met (*enteriner*) the Queen's wishes, her *bon vueil*. For Christine, in other words, the production and reception of an intellectual and cultural artefact is a strategy whereby she sustains her own distinction; but the advantage is mutual, since for Isabeau, Christine implies, to receive such an artefact is to acquire visible evidence of her, Isabeau's, authority and prestige.

And certainly, what Christine presents to Isabeau is ordered and authoritative. There is, for instance, at the very beginning of the volume, a neat<sup>143</sup> 'Table des dictiez en general, balades, rondiaux et autres particuliers livres qui sont contenus en ce present livre' (fol. 1<sup>v</sup>). The volume proper opens (fol. 4<sup>r</sup>) with Christine's *Cent Balades*, headed by one of those self-portraits for which Christine's manuscripts are famous: a column-width portrait of Christine at her desk, meditatively – authoritatively? – writing in a neat hand in another capacious, and beautifully designed, manuscript. The vellum

<sup>142</sup> 'Prologue', in *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. by Roy, I, pp. xiv-xvii, ll. 49-60. The implications of *enteriner*, 'accomplir entièrement' (Godefroy, III, pp. 261-62) are interesting: precisely how explicit, then, were Isabeau's instructions for the volume?

<sup>143</sup> Though not, admittedly, entirely useful: the contents are simply listed, without page-references.

throughout the manuscript is of the highest quality; the hand is meticulously accurate and careful;<sup>144</sup> the illustrations are lavish and designed specifically for this volume; there are neat running headings, to facilitate locating any particular text. Someone (Christine herself? More interestingly, Isabeau?) has, moreover, insisted on the contents being scrupulously up to date: as Sandra Hindman shows, provision has been made in the sixth quire of the volume, by allowing for the insertion of extra folios, for the addition of some items possibly not planned for in the original disposition of the volume: what the headings call 'encore autres balades',<sup>145</sup> ballades with a particular topical cast, and it looks as if certain of the items in the manuscript, such as Christine's *Cent ballades d'amant et de dame*, were probably copied, initially, in separate booklets and incorporated into the final codex.<sup>146</sup>

This is, then, an expensive, luxury object, carefully planned and meticulously executed. But at whose initiative? I have spoken of it as if it were incontrovertibly a commission, and phrases from the prologue, like 'vo command en reçu', would certainly suggest this, although we have no record of any specific payment. The question is worth asking, however, because Christine's practice varied, and at least some of the manuscripts that she produced were done 'on spec', as it were, in the hopes of finding a buyer – or of acquiring advantage of some sort for herself: advantage which was not only pecuniary, since she seems to have used at least a few

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<sup>144</sup> Hindman, 'The Composition', p. 120, n. 4, confirms, with support from Gilbert Ouy, that the hand is Christine's own, though with variations consequent on the ink used and the date of copying; c.f. also Ouy and Reno, 'Identification'.

<sup>145</sup> 'The Composition', 108-09. Hindman's careful detective work shows how here, as well as elsewhere in the volume, Christine 'managed' the presentation of her works; see her *Christine de Pizan's 'Epistre Othea'*.

<sup>146</sup> On the complex construction of this manuscript, see Hindman, 'The Composition'.

volumes as a sort of lever to persuade Philip of Burgundy to take her son into his service.<sup>147</sup> If however the manuscripts did sell, the rewards were ample compensation for the commercial risk that she was taking:<sup>148</sup> the inventory of his library done for the duc de Berry in 1413 shows just how lucrative the production of manuscripts could be: it seems that he bought what is probably the so-called Duke's Manuscript for a positively princely sum:

Un livre compilé de plusieurs balades et ditiés, fait et composé par damoiselle Cristine de Pisan, escript de lettre de court, bien historié et enluminé, le quel Monseigneur a acheté de la dite damoiselle 200 escus.<sup>149</sup>

Patrons, in other words, presumably saw some cultural advantage in the acquisition of a magnificent manuscript: an advantage beyond the simple pleasure of being able to read the work itself, an advantage which compensated for financial expenditure on this sort of scale.

But I want to turn now to a rather less spectacular example. Eustache Deschamps is one of the most prolific poets of the late Middle Ages; his collected works, mostly consisting of fixed-form lyrics, run to eleven daunting volumes in their modern edition.<sup>150</sup> They are to be found collected in one large unwieldy quarto

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<sup>147</sup> *Le Livre de l'advison Cristine*, ed. by Reno and Dulac, pp. 114-5. Christine also shows (ibid., p. 112) how she used her *dictiez* as a passport to win the favour of Richard II of England for her 'assez abille et bien chantant' son.

<sup>148</sup> On this subject, see Laidlaw, 'Christine de Pizan – A Publisher's Progress'.

<sup>149</sup> Cited by Roy, I, p. vi. The manuscript in question is, of course, BNF MSS fr. 835, 836, 605 (and possibly 607), prepared in 1408-9 for the duc de Berry.

<sup>150</sup> *Oeuvres complètes*. By far the most interesting study of this manuscript is Huot's 'Lyric Poetics'.

manuscript, BNF fr. 840, which consists of nearly 600 closely-written leaves,<sup>151</sup> and which seems to be the *summa* of the writer's poetic career – so it includes even unfinished pieces like the poet's *Miroir de mariage* and his *Fiction du lyon*. Everything suggests that Deschamps, who held salaried posts at the courts of Charles V, Charles VI, and Louis d'Orléans, was cavalier with the preservation of the lyrics which he tossed off for every conceivable occasion: political ballades, polemic ballades, derision, self-mockery, ballades written to command, celebratory ballades, condemnatory ballades; his poems include a couple of rather depressed pleas to readers to return examples of his poems of which he himself had failed to keep copies.<sup>152</sup> And certainly, by the time of his death in 1404 or so,<sup>153</sup> he seems to have left ballades and rondeaux and longer, unfinished works scribbled on loose sheets and in random, unbound quires in his study, as a note on fol.431<sup>r</sup> in the manuscript suggests:

Ci commencent pluseurs balades morales faictes par le dit Eustaces,  
lesquelles ont esté trouuees en pluseurs papiers et escrips depuis les  
precedens balades cy dessus escriptes.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> See Siméon Luce's short note in Deschamps' *Oeuvres complètes*, II, pp. vi-xvi, and now, more fully, Marie-Hélène Tesnières, 'Les manuscrits copiés par Raoul Tainguy: un aspect de la culture des grands officiers royaux au début du XVe siècle', *Romania*, 107 (1986), 282-368, and Karin Becker, *Eustache Deschamps: l'état actuel de la recherche* (Orléans: Paradigme, 1996), pp. 22-31. Some lyrics are to be found in other manuscripts: see Becker, *Eustache Deschamps*, pp. 24-6.

<sup>152</sup> In ballade XXIV, he regrets having lent so many, and in ballade CMLXXXIV, he laments the fact that someone has purloined one; he begs the culprit to return his *choses principaulx*, because his *las cuer* will never have the energy to rewrite them.

<sup>153</sup> See the authoritative biography by I. S. Laurie: 'Eustache Deschamps: 1340(?)–1404' in *Eustache Deschamps, French Courtier Poet. His Work and His World*, ed. by Deborah M. Sinnreich-Levi (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 1-72,

<sup>154</sup> Fol. 431<sup>r</sup>; *Oeuvres complètes*, VIII, p. 75.

Français 840, then, is presumably an attempt to anchor Deschamps' errant *oeuvre*; what is unclear, however, is who was responsible for the enterprise: for the immense and thankless – and expensive – labour which must have gone into the copying process, for the not inconsiderable expense of the parchment.

Eustache himself, as my last quotation shows, was certainly dead by the time the volume was complete: two longer treatises are unfinished, a fact for which the scribe apologizes by saying of the *Fiction du Lyon*: 'Cy mourut l'auteur et pour ce demoura *La Fiction* cy dessus imparfaicte' (fol. 485<sup>r</sup>), and of the *Miroir de Mariage*: 'De la matere de ce livre ne traicta l'auteur plus avant pour maladie qui lui survint de laquele il mourut. Dieu lui pardoint a l'ame. Amen' (fol. 487<sup>v</sup>).

There are, of course, two possibilities. The first would suggest that Eustache, before he died, had organized the process of copying as far as fol. 431<sup>r</sup>, the point at which some third party tells us, explicitly, as we saw, that the remainder of the volume consists of verses found in the poet's study after his death. But even if he had indeed started to put his works in some sort of order, it seems unlikely that this huge but not especially elegant volume was planned as the equivalent of one of the magnificent presentation volumes which, we saw, were executed by more ruthlessly self-promoting poets like Christine de Pizan and Guillaume de Machaut:<sup>155</sup> scholars generally agree that the volume was

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<sup>155</sup> Deschamps was close to Machaut, and moved in the same circles: it is plausible therefore that if he himself had planned a presentation copy of his complete works, he might have modelled it on Machaut's. One manuscript may have been planned and executed by Eustache himself: BNF fr. 20029, devised for Charles V, but still incomplete at the latter's death in 1380 and

probably planned and executed by a slightly eccentric scribe, Raoul Tainguy, who personally copied 536 of its leaves, and who, as Marie-Hélène Tesnière says, ‘semble avoir préparé le travail des autres copistes’.<sup>156</sup> Now it may be, of course, that Raoul was making a fair copy of poems that Deschamps had already set out and put in a semblance of order<sup>157</sup> – but if so, what Raoul has produced is, in some ways, and contrary perhaps to the impression often given,<sup>158</sup> a careful, rather thoughtful volume. It opens with a meticulous *Table*,<sup>159</sup> which classes all Eustache’s ballades, then rondeaux, then virelais and so on, alphabetically by refrain-line or by first line,<sup>160</sup> and judging by its rubric, this certainly seems to have been completed after Eustache’s death:

En ces presentes rubriques sont les refrains de toutes les balades et  
chançons roiaux, et les premiers vers de tous les rondeaux et virelays

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subsequently presented to Charles VI in 1383: it is a presentation copy of the poet’s *Lai de fragilité humaine*, meticulously illustrated.

<sup>156</sup> ‘Les manuscrits copiés par Raoul Tainguy’; I quote here from p. 341. I say ‘eccentric’ because Tainguy makes a habit of ‘signing’ his work with odd adverbs, *catervaument* (which seems to mean something like ‘drunkenly’: f. 314<sup>v</sup>) and *tuffaument* (‘mob-handed’, or ‘crazily’: fol. 578<sup>v</sup>) – as well, in the case of this particular manuscript, as with his own name, R. Tainguy (fol. 581<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>157</sup> As all critics point out, ‘order’ is relative: the poems are certainly not copied in any way that corresponds to chronology, there are repetitions, groups of answer-poems are broken up: see Poirion, *Le Poète et le prince*, pp. 218-19.

<sup>158</sup> Raynaud for instance is rather scathing: see Deschamps’ *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, pp. 104-05.

<sup>159</sup> Prepared alphabetically, by first line. On late-medieval indexing, see Lloyd W. Daly, *Contribution to a History of Alphabetization in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Brussels: Latomus, 1967), and Francis Witty, ‘Early Indexing Techniques: A Study of Several Book Indexes from the Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries’, *Library Quarterly*, 35 (1965), 141-48.

<sup>160</sup> Somewhat awkwardly, in that it simply groups together all first lines beginning, say, with *p*, but does not classify alphabetically within the *p* section. The intention, however, is laudable: on scribes’ increasing interest in rational, reader-friendly organization of codices, see e.g. Mary A. and Richard H. Rouse, ‘La naissance des index’ in *Histoire de l’édition française, t. I: Le livre conquérant* ed. Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier (Paris: PROMODIS, 1982), pp. 77-85.

estans en ce present livre, selon l'ordre de l'A B C ... dudit volumine fait par feu Eustace des Champs, dit Morel, escuier, huissier d'armes du Roy nostre sire, Chastellain de Fismes et son bailli de Senlis ....<sup>161</sup>

There then follow, in order, all of the poet's works arranged generically and also, in the case of the ballades, thematically:<sup>162</sup> *Balades de moralitez* (fols. 1-67); *Lays* (fols. 67-102); *Chançons royaulx* (fols. 102-140); *Balades amoureuses* (fols. 141-172); *Rondeaulx* (fols. 173-202) ... Some of the lyrics have titles: not just the occasional 'Autre balade', but commendations ('Balade de Nostre Dame *moult belle*'; ballade CXXXIV, my italics), or brief synopses ('Autre balade, des vins que on souloit anciennement presenter aux baillis et juges'; ballade MCCLXXVII), or instructions to ensure that readers know how, politically, to read ('Balade faicte sur la division et cisme de l'Eglise qui est au jour d'ui moult troublee par la lune';<sup>163</sup> ballade CMXLVIII). Raoul Tainguy's hand is a neat, even *bâtarde* – as indeed are the hands of the subsidiary scribes whom Raoul directed; the pages are carefully ruled, with spacious upper and lower margins; initials are done in red or blue, and the first letters of each line are touched with yellow; there are pen-flourishes on ascenders and descenders; there is space left for an initial miniature which has never been completed. This is not, in other words, a perfunctory or penny-pinching volume: someone, some patron, has felt it

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<sup>161</sup> *Oeuvres complètes*, I, p. 1.

<sup>162</sup> This meticulous concern for order, very rare in, for instance, the *chansonnières*, is not unusual in the later Middle Ages: by contrast, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 308 is one of the few *chansonnières* that classifies its lyrics by genre (see Paul Meyer, *Documents manuscrits de l'ancienne littérature de la France conservés dans les bibliothèques de la Grande Bretagne* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1871), p. 239).

<sup>163</sup> 'Lune' is, of course, Pope Benedict XIII, Pedro de Luna, elected to the Avignon papacy in 1394 and whose name invites puns.

worthwhile to invest in the considerable material and manpower costs that its production has demanded.

So who was it who thought Eustache's collected works of such importance that a scribe needed to be commissioned to ensure their proper display and preservation? Raoul Tainguy, it turns out,<sup>164</sup> is the scribe of at least thirteen surviving manuscripts – and was, as it were, the accredited scribe for an eminent household, that of Arnaud de Corbie, Chancellor of France from 1388 to 1398, and then from 1400 to 1405 and 1409 to 1415. For Arnaud, Raoul copied some magnificent manuscripts: certainly, among others, superbly illustrated copies<sup>165</sup> of Froissart's *Chronicles*, and probably of Valerius Maximus' *Facta et dicta memorabilia* translated by Simon de Hesdin; for Arnaud's father-in-law, a translation of Livy. In organization, disposition, hand, *mise en page*, these manuscripts are all very comparable to what we have seen in the case of fr. 840: there is, in other words, a 'house style' which attaches to Tainguy's manuscripts for Arnaud de Corbie, which makes it more than probable that Deschamps' complete *oeuvre* was copied for the Chancellor. We know nothing which would explain why Arnaud might have made a particular point of acquiring a complete copy of Deschamps' verse at such considerable effort and expense – although we might legitimately wonder if their acquaintance had something to do with geography. Deschamps was in the course of his career *bailli de Valois* and *bailli*

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<sup>164</sup> Information teased out by Tesnière, 'Les manuscrits copiés par Raoul Tainguy'.

<sup>165</sup> Arnaud – if all the manuscripts were copied for him – employed some of the best miniaturists; see the *Notices* in Tesnière, 'Les manuscrits copiés par Raoul Tainguy', pp. 324-68.



*de Senlis*,<sup>166</sup> and Arnaud was the owner of extensive estates in the Beauvaisis. We do know that Arnaud, like Deschamps, was associated with the *Cour amoureuse*;<sup>167</sup> we do know that on at least one occasion, he produced a quite ingeniously-rhymed ballade;<sup>168</sup> we can guess, from the contents of his library and those of his associates and contemporaries, that he was a man of some culture.<sup>169</sup> We also know that Arnaud de Corbie was attached to Raoul Tainguy: as Tesnière shows, rather ingeniously, the Chancellor probably left his *secrétaire* a quite substantial legacy in his will.<sup>170</sup> And it does seem that the Chancellor was something of a devotee, since each of two further manuscripts copied by Raoul, and in all probability for Arnaud de Corbie, contains the same run of seven ballades by Eustache: ‘balades morales faictes et compilées par noble homme et prudent Eustace Morel, n’a guières bailli de Senlis’.<sup>171</sup> Was it Deschamps’ protean lyrics – always something appropriate for any occasion – that made Arnaud give Raoul Tainguy the commission? Was that why the volume is copied in ways which are relatively sophisticated (*compilatio*), with the contents carefully

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<sup>166</sup> See Laurie, ‘Eustache Deschamps’.

<sup>167</sup> Ed. Bozzolo and Loyau, I, p. 78.

<sup>168</sup> Ballade CXLVI; *Oeuvres complètes*, pp. 272-73.

<sup>169</sup> See Tesnière, ‘Les manuscrits’, pp. 321-23.

<sup>170</sup> Tesnière, ‘Les manuscrits’, p. 298.

<sup>171</sup> Quoted from the Toulouse MS by Raynaud in Deschamps, *Oeuvres complètes*, III, p. xvii, and XI, p. 108. The two manuscripts are Turin, Bibl. già Reale, Saluzzo 188, largely devoted to Vegetius’ *De Re militari*, and Toulouse, BM MS 822, principally containing Boethius’ *Consolatio philosophiae* and a translation of the *Disticha Catonis*; the ballades are nos ccxlviii, cccci, ccccvii, ccccxviii, mclxv, mclxvii, mcccxciv.

categorized (*ordinatio*) and a table for easy alphabetical reference?<sup>172</sup> These are not questions to which there are easy answers – but the fact that such care was taken in the ordering and organization of this dense, dutiful manuscript suggests a seriousness of purpose which is evidence, once again, of the importance attached to the lyric, and of the ways in which patrons presumably felt that to possess such a manuscript was, in Bourdieuan terms, to heighten their sense of cultural worth.<sup>173</sup>

But now for some very different manuscripts: manuscripts, this time, which seem not to be oriented towards a patron's particular individual taste, but which seem – again in Bourdieu's terms – rather to express, and perhaps even to shape, social interaction within a particular group. Christine's and Eustache's are, of course, 'display' manuscripts, designed for readers, carefully arranged and professionally transcribed, Christine's as a showcase for the variety of her talents, Eustache's, it seems, composed as an *oeuvre de piété* after his death.<sup>174</sup> They are both, in other words, planned, *post hoc* productions, made either to

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<sup>172</sup> Once again, as with Christine's *Cent ballades* and *Cent ballades d'amant et de dame*, see Alastair Minnis, 'Late-Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio* and the Rôle of the *Compiler*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 101 (1979), 385-421, and M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays presented to R. W. Hunt*, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 115-41.

<sup>173</sup> For an interesting viewpoint on this variety of author-centred manuscript, see Sylvia Huot, 'The Writer's Mirror: Watriquet de Couvin and the Development of the Author-Centred Book', in *Across Boundaries: The Book in Culture and Commerce*, ed. by Bill Bell, Philip Bennett and Jonquil Bevan (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 2000), pp. 29-46.

<sup>174</sup> It is interesting that, according to Julia Boffey (*Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985), pp. 134-35) the planned, often decorated or illuminated, manuscripts of lyric verse found in France do not exist in England.

commission or in the hope that they might appeal to the taste of a known reader/patron, and because of this, they give a rather misleadingly rosy picture of the poetico-lyric manuscript at the end of the Middle Ages. For contrast, let me turn to a couple of much less elegant manuscripts which, because they seem to be collections of the miscellaneous poetry copied, enjoyed, often perhaps even composed, within distinct social groups, give a rather different view of the dynamics and social history of verse in an expanding literate audience: a somewhat unkempt miscellany, BNF fr. 1719, and a distinctly undistinguished manuscript from what is now the Bibliothèque Intercommunale Epinal-Golbey, MS 217.<sup>175</sup> I shall want to argue, here, that in the case of manuscripts like these latter we need to rethink our relationship to the written word. Whereas Christine's and Eustache's manuscripts are produced for readers – readers who will appreciate the fineness of the hand, the beauty of the illustrations – these are manuscripts for which the notion of 'reading' cannot adequately account, and for which the circumstances of actual enunciation and collection may need consideration: *recorderly* manuscripts, to return to the coinage I invented in my Introduction. I want, in other words, and here I am drawing on Roger Chartier, to think about these manuscripts not as text 'monument' but as text 'event': that is, and I revert to my adjective *recorderly*, that the manuscripts are not designed primarily prospectively, for new readers, but rather retrospectively, as ways of celebrating a particular moment. Their *mise en page*, in other words, has to do with the circumstances of production and the ways in which the poems they

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<sup>175</sup> Previously Epinal, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 189, subsequently MS 59; I am grateful to Mlle Florence Bouvenet, at the Bibliothèque Intercommunale, for this information.

contain were appropriated into writing.<sup>176</sup> Chartier explains the distinction by saying that certain texts allow us ‘to reconstruct something of the[ir] oral circulation [...] and to comprehend the relationship with texts that this particular form of communication and reception of works implies’ (p. 14) – and the inverted commas I have used around ‘monument’ and ‘event’ draw attention to the fact that, like Chartier, I do not pretend that one can reconstruct the actual circumstances of recording;<sup>177</sup> rather, the word ‘event’ here draws attention to these manuscript as reflections of the social circumstances of production and preservation, by contrast, say, with Christine’s manuscript or Deschamps’, or Machaut’s, which as ‘monuments’ to their authors invite admiration, and attentive reading, of the finished product. What I shall want to argue, in the remainder of this chapter and indeed in the remainder of this book, is that certain lyric manuscripts may be produced not prospectively, that is as ‘monuments’ for the admiration of future readers, but rather retrospectively, reflecting the pleasure of the ‘event’ in which the poet-copyists took part: such manuscripts are, I shall suggest, realizations on the page of scenes of enunciation which are otherwise inaccessible.

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<sup>176</sup> ‘Orality Lost: Text and Voice in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in *Across Boundaries*, ed. by Bell et al., pp. 1-28. Chartier deals explicitly with the Renaissance and after, but what he says is perfectly relevant to the fifteenth-century manuscript. He acknowledges that he takes the distinction from the theatre-historian Florence Dupont’s *L’Invention de la littérature. De l’ivresse grecque au livre latin* (Paris: La Découverte, 1994).

<sup>177</sup> Chartier does not make the point, but as Judson Allen says (*The Ethical Poetics of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1982), p. 263), the fact that we cannot locate particular events and incidents to which to fix poems does not mean that they did not exist – and of course, more particularly, it does not mean that their readerships could not identify, or infer, them.

The two ‘event’ manuscripts I refer to are, unlike Christine’s and even Eustache’s, distinctly unattractive. The first, BNF fr. 1719, is in fact positively chaotic.<sup>178</sup> Where the hands that have copied both the former, for instance, are careful and in Christine’s case decidedly graceful, where the pages are good quality vellum, where there is a distinct sense of order, where Christine’s decoration at least is lavish, fr. 1719 is untidy: it has no trace of decoration, it has been copied onto poor quality paper by a number of hands – there are several on the two pages in fig. 2, and the latest editor of the manuscript, Françoise Fery-Hue, identifies no fewer than eighteen, from a neat, small, *bâtarde* to an untidy near-cursive, many distinctly clumsy and careless – the poems are copied and recopied, pell-mell and higgledy-piggledy, on the page.<sup>179</sup> The inks differ, many of the lyrics appear twice or even three times, there are few if any attempts at titles (at most, some of the copyists mark *rondeau* at the head of some particular lyric). It is a manuscript that gives every appearance of carelessness: not one, in other words, that would seem to support the suggestion that the lyric was something that a patron, or a household, might have valued.

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<sup>178</sup> Not least because some of the folios have been damaged – it is unclear how – and restored, and because the binding is also damaged. Françoise Fery-Hue provides an excellent study, and partial edition, in ‘*Au grey d’amours ...*’ (*Pièces inédites du manuscrit Paris, Bibl. nat., fr. 1719*): *étude et édition*, *Le Moyen Français*, 27-28 (Montreal: CERES, 1991): partial, because she edits only poems not previously published elsewhere, principally by Marcel Schwob, *La Parnasse satyrique du quinzième siècle: anthologie de pièces libres* (Paris: Welter, 1889); I use Fery-Hue’s overall numberings for clarity.

<sup>179</sup> One copyist, for instance (fol. 11<sup>r</sup>), starts to copy a *rondeau* to the left of the page, realizes that it would be better on the right, scribbles out the lines he has already copied, draws a line down the middle of the page, and starts again on the right – an inexplicable manoeuvre, since these are four-syllable lines: did he feel they would be seen to better advantage so?

True, some of this impression of inattention has to do with the make-up of the manuscript as it is at present constituted: fr. 1719 is, indisputably, a composite. We can, to a degree, recreate the process whereby it was put together. It falls into two, perfectly distinct, parts. The first, the scrappiest – and the one on which I intend to concentrate – is relatively short: a mere twenty leaves, in three booklets all incomplete and consisting, on watermark evidence, of a mix of five different papers, which seem to have been copied – here, I can only agree with Françoise Fery-Hue – by no fewer than fourteen different hands. Fery-Hue suggests,<sup>180</sup> more than plausibly, that the three booklets were left lying loose and that into them poems were copied, as occasions or models presented themselves, by members of some household and their friends and acquaintances, or perhaps even by professional clerks or scribes employed by the household;<sup>181</sup> that the booklets were then, in some form, gathered together,<sup>182</sup> maybe, she suggests, by the reviser who has gone over the texts of

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<sup>180</sup> 'Au grey d'amours', p. 10.

<sup>181</sup> A clear case of what Ralph Hanna calls 'happenstance acquisition...': 'Miscellaneity and Vernacularity: conditions of literary production in late medieval England', *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. by Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 37-51 (p. 47).

<sup>182</sup> The mechanisms whereby lyrics circulated in late-medieval France have not been sufficiently studied: for Middle English, see Pamela Robinson, 'The "Booklet": A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts', *Codicologica*, 3 (1980), 46-69; Ralph Hanna III, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Considerations', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), 100-11; Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: production and choice of texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279-315; A. S. G. Edwards, 'Bodleian Library MS Arch.Selden B.24: A "Transitional" Collection', in *The Whole Book*, ed. by Nichols and Wenzel, pp. 53-67; Richard C. Newton, 'Making Books from Leaves: Poets Become Editors', in

the fifty or so poems which appear in this first part, corrected odd spellings and expressions (as in fig. 2) and completed occasional lyrics where lines were missing.<sup>183</sup> There is nothing to show who was the patron or whose the household,<sup>184</sup> or even where this group of fourteen copyists could have been taking their material from: although much of the content of this first section is shared with other lyric collections, no surviving single exemplar can be said to be a source, and everything suggests a process of opportunist transcription, as any particular poem was heard or came to hand in an existing copy.<sup>185</sup> The second, and much longer, segment of the manuscript, the remaining 162 folios (fols 20-182), containing some 456 lyrics, seems to have been conceived rather differently, from its inception, as a single unit, although one without pretensions to elegance: the poems are copied in large measure by only two hands, from what were probably a number of existing exemplars, again unidentifiable, but which contained well-known poems by poets like Deschamps and Christine,

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*Print and Culture in the Renaissance: Essays on the Advent of Printing in Europe*, ed. by Gerald P. Tyson and Sylvia S. Wagonheim (Newark, DW: University of Delaware Press, 1986), pp. 246-64.

<sup>183</sup> His work, as it happens, is meticulous, and interesting technically: as fig. 2 shows, he, or of course she, has corrected a mistake in rondeau no. 4 at the foot of fol. 1<sup>v</sup>, corrected the *mise en page* of rondeau no. 5 at the head of fol. 2<sup>r</sup>, struck through a mistaken copying at the foot of fol. 2<sup>r</sup>, and supplied the missing stanza.

<sup>184</sup> Even the watermark evidence is inconclusive, all papers using a unicorn of various styles; see Fery-Hue, '*Au grey d'amours*', p. 10, n. 5, p.13.

<sup>185</sup> As Fery-Hue's edition shows, with admirable thoroughness, the vast majority of the poems in fr. 1719, and many of those in the first segment that I concentrate on here, are shared with other lyric collections of the end of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance – including Charles' manuscript, two of the manuscripts which are the subject of chapter 3 (BNF fr. 9223 and BNF n.a.f. 15771), and no fewer than 73 pieces shared with the subject of my chapter 4, Vérard's *Jardin de Plaisance*.

Villon and Charles d'Orléans,<sup>186</sup> alongside anonymous pieces some of which appear in no other surviving anthology. At some stage, at the very end of the fifteenth century,<sup>187</sup> the first little sheaf of loose sheets and the second major group were bound together – at which point a second reviser went over both sections, but especially over the second section: this second reviser too has made corrections to many of the lyrics, crossed out some of the pieces copied more than once (as well as cancelling a set of useful aphrodisiac recipes in the first section<sup>188</sup>), noted in the margin the first letter of the first word of each poem (as on fig. 2), and begun to compose a table of contents on rather the same lines as that in Deschamps' complete works.<sup>189</sup>

All this, of course, militates against there being any sense of that continuity and design which seemed to me to spell value not just in Christine's magnificently-conceived codex but even in the rather feverishly complete manuscript that preserves Eustache Deschamps' works – and if design is difficult to detect even in the second section of the manuscript, where there is some evidence at least of intent and some sign of through-copying, then it is even more cruelly absent in those first twenty miscellaneous leaves, with their fourteen hands and their motley collection of unconnected, anonymous little verses.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> See Schwob, *Le Parnasse satyrique*, pp. 3-7.

<sup>187</sup> See Fery-Hue, 'Au grey d'Amours', p. 13.

<sup>188</sup> Simply (fols. 19<sup>r-v</sup>) by putting a thick cross through them. The recipes are edited Schwob, *Le Parnasse satyrique*, pp. 63-5.

<sup>189</sup> Of which some rudimentary traces appear on fols. 182v.

<sup>190</sup> The question of anonymity and named-ness will preoccupy me in chapter 3, where I argue that the emblemization of the name is characteristic of manuscripts which are self-advertisements or self-definitions for a particular coterie.



And yet: even though we can scarcely speak of design, even though the verses on those latter leaves are so unsystematically and randomly copied, it must surely be the case that we have to assume some input of *taste*: someone, after all, thought these often negligible little poems worth transcribing; if not that, then someone valued their contents enough to gather up the loose leaves and bind them, along with the much more programmed second part, into a single volume; someone, however cursorily, thought it was worthwhile to go back over the manuscript and tidy it up. And even though the meagre little anthology in the first part cannot be called coherent or homogeneous, it does give us an idea of something like a 'typological personality' for whatever individual or household collected the lyrics and preserved them on loose sheets of paper and odd, incomplete quires.<sup>191</sup> That household, or that patron, seems to have enjoyed courtly commonplace, true, but to have had a particular predilection for more or less refined bawdry.<sup>192</sup> Take, for instance, the poems copied by the very first hand onto the recto and verso of the first loose leaf of the existing manuscript (Fery-Hue nos 1-4; for nos 3 and 4, see fig. 2). The first<sup>193</sup> is a (studiously

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<sup>191</sup> The expression is used by the editors of *The Whole Book* (p. 2): 'the possibility that a given manuscript, having been organized along certain principles, may well present its text(s) according to its own agenda, as worked out by the person who planned and supervised the production'.

<sup>192</sup> A taste shared, exuberantly, in the second part of the manuscript: it is no coincidence that it was from fr. 1719 that Marcel Schwob transcribed some 67 of the 135 *pièces libres* that he published in his *Parnasse satyrique* ... Interestingly, Arthur Marotti also finds obscenity to constitute a 'serious percentage of circulating verse' in what he calls 'coterie manuscripts', because of the 'private, closed world' which produced it: see his *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), pp. 44-82.

<sup>193</sup> Ed. by Schwob, *Le Parnasse satyrique*, p. 53. The impotence of old age is a poetic cliché in late-medieval verse: see Johnson, *Poets as Players*, pp. 253-59.

metaphorical) lament for the impotence of old age: the writer's *courtault*, 'broken-down old nag', which used to be so *vif à ung assault* (and expert at *cloquer culz*), is now a *douloureux marpault*, 'shrunk little beast'. Poem no. 2, a *rondeau*, is a bit of a lament: the writer has spent his life trying to satisfy whores, and it's killing him:

A l'appetit d'une putain  
 Fault-il que je mette dehors  
 Ce qui me doibt nourrir le corps  
 Pour ung trou qui n'est jamais plain? <sup>194</sup>

The third poem,<sup>195</sup> still in the same hand, is based on a convoluted conceit whereby the poet figures himself as a hawk trained by his lady, the falconer: the hawk is determined to keep its distance, but 'si plus elle luy monstre la chair ....'! And the fourth, by Jean Marot,<sup>196</sup> is a cheerfully amoral little *rondeau* celebrating the dangerous art of keeping two women happy ('... bien subtile y seroit la science D'avoir seurté en secret et recoy A toutes deux')<sup>197</sup>. These are not, obviously, homogeneous poems; they share, however, a certain prurient good humour and while it would be too much, perhaps, to talk of textual organisation, or even of a sequence, there is nevertheless a sense in which this single folio suggests that regardless of the mode of circulation of these verses, regardless of

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<sup>194</sup> Ed. by Schwob, *Le Parnasse satyrique*, p. 54.

<sup>195</sup> Ed. by Fery-Hue, *'Au grey d'amours'*, p. 149.

<sup>196</sup> *Poèmes de transition (XVe-XVIe siècles): rondeaux du ms. 402 de Lille*, ed. by Marcel Françon, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Paris: Droz, 1938), p. 136.

<sup>197</sup> Ed. in Jehan Marot, *Les Deux recueils de Jehan Marot de Caen .....*, ed. by Gérard Defaux and Thierry Mantovani (Geneva: Droz, 1999), p.204.

their provenance,<sup>198</sup> what might at first seem like gratuitous and random choices may have been made in accord with readerly predilections.

As indeed, it may be supposed, is much of the content of this section of the manuscript. It is important not to homogenize – but consider the third booklet, fols. 14-19.<sup>199</sup> Onto its first, outer leaf, have been copied the first two stanzas of a vituperative ballade, or *sotte ballade*: ‘Vous avez couleur morisque, visage tartarin, Nez de singesse, grant menton barbarin ...’.<sup>200</sup> Only death, says the poet, can be worse than getting tied to something so hideous. Does this poem set the tone for the remainder of the booklet? Fols. 14<sup>v</sup>, 15 and 16<sup>r</sup> are blank – why? there is nothing to explain it<sup>201</sup> – but on fol. 16<sup>v</sup>,<sup>202</sup> we find yet another faintly misogynistic little verse:<sup>203</sup> the poet’s desperate state can only be compared to being in prison, ‘incensé du membre capital, Acompagné d’une

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<sup>198</sup> Might at least some of them have been not just copied, but composed, within the social circle that generated the manuscript? Poems numbered by Fery-Hue 1 and 2 appear nowhere else; 3 was later to reach the *Jardin de Plaisance* to which I return in the final chapter; only 4, by Jean Marot, seems to have circulated at all widely. The question is unanswerable – but it does allow for the possibility that the manuscript is both receptive and productive, like those I shall concentrate on in chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>199</sup> Consisting of only six leaves, two having disappeared. Again, Fery-Hue is hugely informative.

<sup>200</sup> Ed. Schwob, *Le Parnasse satyrique*, p. 61-62. On these genres, see S.V. Spilsbury, ‘The Imprecatory Ballade: A Fifteenth-Century Poetic Genre’, *French Studies*, 33 (1979), 385-96, and on the *sotte ballade*, my ‘Grosse Margot and Sotte Chanson: François Villon’s Art of Adaptation’, in *The Medieval Opus: Imitation, Rewriting and Transmission in the French Tradition*, ed. by Douglas Kelly (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 139-54.

<sup>201</sup> Although it is surely additional evidence that the copying process for this first section of the manuscript is distinctly adventitious.

<sup>202</sup> The hand is Fery-Hue’s hand V, which copied a disillusioned little rondeau, ‘Fortune, tu me es trop perverse ...’, onto the second page of the first booklet.

<sup>203</sup> Ed. by Fery-Hue, ‘*Au grey d’amours*’, no. 48.

femme noiseuse, Estre impotent ...' This is followed on fols. 17<sup>r</sup>-18<sup>v</sup> by a couple of longer poems all in the same hand: by a ballade otherwise unknown on women's deceptiveness, by the epitaph which Georges Chastellain wrote for his *Oultré d'amour*, a hero who died for love,<sup>204</sup> and finally by a set of four 'recipes' for love.

Now, again, it would be forcing the evidence to talk of coherence, but it is difficult to avoid the feeling that the reading forced by the compilation, as each poem contaminates the next, is designed far less for readers – why, if so, the blank pages, the scrappy presentation? – than for the enjoyment and satisfaction of those who produced the pages. This manuscript, in other words, seems to me to invite focus on the event which occasioned its production: that is, on the ways in which the contents were appropriated by copyists at the service of the sort of active cultural preference that held sway in whichever circle was responsible for its production, and which for Bourdieu constitutes taste.<sup>205</sup> It is, I would argue, the product of contemporary conventions as to the devising and ownership and sponsorship of poetic volumes, rather than a product actively planned for the greater amusement of a reader. My point here is that this scruffy manuscript, which cannot but seem poetically mediocre (not to say uninteresting), may

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<sup>204</sup> Edited Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Georges Chastellain, Oeuvres*, VI (Brussels: Heussner, 1866), pp. 67-128 (pp. 77-80); the reviser has scribbled the word *Epytaffe* in the right margin.

<sup>205</sup> An interesting phenomenon: two of the hands, hand II (Fery-Hue, nos. 4, 5, 7; for 4 and 5, see fig. 2) and VIII (Fery-Hue, 34, 37, 38, 39, 47), have clearly copied the first lines of their poems at an earlier stage, in a paler ink, something Fery-Hue suggests was done in order to 'réserver la place' (p. 10, note 7). If this is so, it is another element that suggests principles of planning and active choice which tend to escape us as modern readers. For Bourdieu on taste, see *La Distinction: critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1979).

acquire a real depth of meaning when it is discussed in terms of production – far more meaning certainly than it can possibly have if it is discussed in terms of ‘art’.<sup>206</sup> Rather than thinking of how this manuscript was read, it is more interesting to consider the stubbornly individual impulses which pervade the circle in which it was generated, and the particular patterns of choice and taste which, to revert once again to Bourdieu, define a place for that circle in the social order.<sup>207</sup>

Let me pursue this point into the other manuscript I mentioned: what looks like another ‘household’ or ‘circle’ manuscript, a not particularly distinguished, in fact rather perfunctory, little volume from Epinal, MS 217, which emanated originally from the household of the comtes d’Esch (Esch-sur-Sûre, Luxembourg).<sup>208</sup> Now, this manuscript is of a very different order from anything

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<sup>206</sup> C.f. Bourdieu, *Les règles de l’art*, p. 15: ‘l’analyse scientifique des conditions sociales de la production et de la réception de l’oeuvre d’art, loin de la réduire ou de la détruire, intensifie l’expérience littéraire’.

<sup>207</sup> I am not, of course, the first to make a point of this sort: see for instance, on the Occitan *chansonniers*, Stephen G. Nichols, “Art’ and ‘Nature’: Looking for (Medieval) Principles of Order in Occitan *Chansonier* N (Morgan 819)’ in *The Whole Book*, pp. 83-121.

<sup>208</sup> See *Romania*, 15 (1886), 172, and c.f. F. Bonnardot, ‘Notice du manuscrit 189 de la Bibliothèque d’Epinal contenant des mélanges latins et français en prose et en vers’, *Bulletin de la Société des Anciens Textes Français*, 2-4 (1876), 64-132. For a fuller study of the manuscript, and an edition of the lyric contents, see Charles Bruneau, ‘La poésie aristocratique à Metz, d’après un manuscrit de la famille d’Esch’, *Annuaire de la Société d’Histoire et d’Archéologie de la Lorraine* (1927), 167-222. It was Bonnardot who proposed that the manuscript originated with the household of the comtes d’Esch, on the basis of scattered sketches of a *guimbarde*, their badge; he suggests a date of c. 1465-77. I could, of course, be accused of being highly selective here: there are plenty of manuscripts which are a record of social interaction at a particular court (see for instance on the ‘debate’ between the courts of Burgundy and Bourbon, Marc-René Jung, ‘Les ‘Douze Dames de Rhétorique’’, in *Du mot au texte: Actes du III<sup>ème</sup> Colloque International sur*

we have looked at so far. It is a bit of a hybrid: some thirteen quires, visibly copied at different times on different papers and with different intentions, consisting, largely, of nicely serious pieces of different dates and provenances – moralizing texts, histories of crusading, prayers, a *Débat de Jésus-Christ et de l'Ame*, a diary of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, manuals of tree-diseases and viticulture ...<sup>209</sup> The more serious texts are, in general, carefully transcribed in neat, even, professional hands which date from the late fourteenth or very early fifteenth centuries. In some of the quires, and in many of the spaces left blank, however, not particularly tidily, and very inaccurately, other hands, from time to time, have transcribed a miscellany of verses.<sup>210</sup> The hands are not those of professional scribes, and the spelling is often more or less phonetic, as if the copyists were amateurs, completely untrained;<sup>211</sup> indeed, the little poems often look as if they might have been copied from memory. They are a real mixture: there is a sprinkling of ballades, very inaccurately and clumsily transcribed, a few by known poets like Eustache Deschamps and Machaut along with others that

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*le Moyen Français*, Düsseldorf, 17-19 septembre 1980, ed. by Peter Wunderli (Tübingen: Narr, 1982), pp. 230-40; I choose the Esch manuscript because its mish-mash of hands and its miscellaneous quires suggest it is a 'household' manuscript of the sort I discuss in the following chapters.

<sup>209</sup> Dating is a problem, largely because the volume is hybrid: the final quires are dated 1395-96, and on fol. 89<sup>r</sup> is the date 1428. The hands suggest dates of that order, but the present binding, which replaces the original, is nineteenth-century, and has brought together texts of various dates: it is the pilgrimage diary, for instance, that relates to 1395-96. There are no watermarks.

<sup>210</sup> Which Bruneau ('La poésie aristocratique', p. 168) describes as 'bribes de sermons, *dits* d'Aristote, charades, mots croisés, extraits d'oeuvres didactiques ou littéraires de tout genre'.

<sup>211</sup> A line like 'Tout teille gens on dobveroit Chessier tout hoirs dé bonne gens', for instance: 'de telles gens devroient être chassés bien loin des bonnes gens' (Bruneau, no. xv).

may have been composed specifically in this circle. Particularly interesting for my argument here, however, is a particular quire, quire no. 7,<sup>212</sup> whose contents are brief lyric poems which fall into various categories: *saluts d'amour* (poems of courtly greeting<sup>213</sup>), *demandes d'amour* (that is, questions relating to amorous etiquette and behaviour: I return to this genre in chapter 4), and *daïements*: that is, what Christine de Pizan called *jeux à vendre*.<sup>214</sup> They are particularly interesting because, like Christine's *jeux*, these exercises in particular modes seem to me to be evidence of the multiple life of the poem as communal property, of the status of verse as a kind of social currency or social leaven, circulating from household to household and serving to create precisely the 'event' that I have been referring to. Take, for instance, the little group of thirty-three *daïements*, 'ventes d'amour' (ff. 77<sup>r</sup>-80<sup>v</sup>). We saw, earlier in this chapter, that these little poems were a sort of parlour-game, a game which seems to have appealed not just to the amateur, courtly poet, but even to a poet of the calibre of Christine de Pizan. The present collection bears every resemblance to the groups I mentioned earlier: indeed, a number of the Esch *ventes d'amour* are

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<sup>212</sup> Quire 7 occupies fols. 77-81. There are other equally miscellaneous quires here: quire 6, for instance, (fols. 65-76) has a selection of *dits d'amours*, a collection of proverbs, some *remedes*, a list of *mirabilia*, and a few odd stanzas from what look like ballades.

<sup>213</sup> The terminology, which is Bruneau's, is misleading. Paul Meyer published a string of what he calls *saluts d'amour* in 'Le salut d'amour dans les littératures provençale et française', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 28 (1867), 124-70 – but his are *épîtres* which are far longer and more elaborate, and have nothing in common with the little Esch verses.

<sup>214</sup> *Daïement* is inscribed at top right on fol. 77<sup>r</sup>. This is, as far as I know, the only manuscript occasion on which the term is used: Bruneau relates it to the Lorrain *dailler*, meaning, it seems, 'to run away', and sees it as stressing the quickness necessary for success. There are, he says, still (in 1927) *daillieurs* in Lorraine ...

plainly versions of those that were anthologized in the early printed volumes whose contents Montaiglon published in the 1850s,<sup>215</sup> and it looks very much as if one of the copyists of the Esch manuscript simply transcribed a pre-existing collection; after no. xxxi, indeed, he has inscribed an emphatic *Explicite* (fol. 80<sup>v</sup>). But then, almost immediately, a different hand transcribes another *vente*, a self-consciously derivative little piece in which the writer borrows the poetic identity of his (or her) models:

Je vous ven la flour de la vanche;  
Sacqiez que le papier et l'enche  
Font escrire maint mesaige,  
Qui font rogier maint visaige.

Now, this is distinctly amateurish: the versifier fails to make any link between the catch-line on *flour de la vanche*<sup>216</sup> and *enche* 'ink'<sup>217</sup> – or, more seriously, to defer to the 'courtly' function of the *ventes d'amour* – and the repetition of *maint* in the third and fourth lines is clumsy. But however amateurish it may be, this additional little poem looks distinctly like the trace of the participation of an ordinary member of the Esch circle in the system of amateur versifying and manuscript transmission of which the manuscript as a whole is evidence. It is as if the unknown copyist had decided to note down a useful compendium of *ventes d'amour*, no doubt for future reference, and as if some other reader/participant had been unable to resist the temptation to join in: to make himself part, in other

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<sup>215</sup> 'Versions' because what must presumably have been a complex process of transmission, often oral, has meant that there are many major variants; nevertheless, the similarities suggest that *ventes d'amour* circulated quite extensively. The modes of transmission are too complex to be explored in any detail here.

<sup>216</sup> 'Periwinkle'; see Godefroy, VIII, 166.

<sup>217</sup> The form *enche*, *enke*, 'ink', is standard: see Godefroy, IX, 455-56.



words, of the ‘event’ as Chartier defines it.<sup>218</sup> Interestingly, very much the same phenomenon is visible with a couple of what Bruneau calls *saluts d’amour* which he also thinks may have been *jeux de salon* composed in the Esch family circle (fig. 3). Take the second of them:

[Demande]

Damoiselle blanche,  
Vostre amis vous mande  
.V. salut et .L. et .V. sallut:  
Que mandeis à lui?

Responce

Je mande à mon Amy  
Qu’i soit prou et herdy,  
Et de son amour bien saisie,  
Et que ma pert ne let il mie,  
Et, quel pert qu’il soit,  
Boins soirs ait ilz!

Noone, of course, would contend that this is a little poem of any distinction at all: the metre is shaky (did the *damoiselle* of the *responce* really intend to slip from hexasyllables to octosyllables?), as is the grammar (*saisie* should surely read *saisi* – but this would be detrimental to the rhyme), and the lexicon and the sentiments are lamentably conventional. But what they do tend to show, I believe, and in a concrete way, is how far the reception and the production of the fixed-form lyric at the end of the Middle Ages remains involved with its social

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<sup>218</sup> A loose leaf containing another *vente*, which was still slipped into the manuscript in 1876 when Bonnardot examined it (see pp. 130-32), had disappeared by 1927: Bonnardot had transcribed it, but its lack is disappointing, because it means that the hand cannot be examined; Bonnardot does say, however, that its hand is the same as that of the *ventes* here. It read, in Bonnardot’s transcription: ‘Je vous van ceu qu’on ne puelit avoir: Ameis tousjours sen decepvoir, Et sy preneis par cortoisie D’amour la graice et seignorie’.

context, and how far a collection of this sort derives from what Chartier calls the 'event': is a cultural practice, not a static repository of texts.<sup>219</sup> Even these mediocre and barely adequate little verses suggest how far a modicum of cultural competence is prized: how important it seemed to become culturally adept and able to participate in the game of verse, and how important it may have been to register the product of the game on the page. This insignificant manuscript, like fr. 1719, seems to put us in direct contact with the making of its content, with the 'event':<sup>220</sup> by enshrining the collective memory on the page, a particular circle has defined its lyrics as social products.

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<sup>219</sup> On a smaller scale, in other words, the Esch manuscript is a layman's commonplace book, of the sort represented in English by manuscripts like Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86, or British Library, MS Harley 2253, which can be traced to individual households – on which see Marilyn Corrie, 'Harley 2253, Digby 86, and the Circulation of Literature in Pre-Chaucerian England' in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. by Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: published for TEAMS in association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2000), pp. 427-43. Digby 86, which dates from the end of the thirteenth century, was originally, it seems, attached to the household of the Grimhill family (see *Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86*, with an introduction by Judith Tschann and M. B. Parkes, SS (EETS) 16 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. lvi-lx), and Harley 2253 to the Ludlow family of Stokesay (see Carter Revard, 'Scribe and Provenance' in *ibid.*, pp. 21-109). Volumes of such sorts became more common in the Tudor period, for instance the Harington MS in Arundel Castle (*The Arundel Harington Manuscript of Tudor Poetry*, ed. by Ruth Hughey (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1960).

<sup>220</sup> C.f. Ardis Butterfield's remark (*Poetry and Music in Medieval France, from Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 15) that 'we might ask whether the text does not in fact contain some sense of the work's character in performance, whether performance is not in some way inscribed within the text rather than irrevocably absent from it?'. A similar point is made, in Bourdieuan terms, by Louis Pinto, *Pierre Bourdieu et la théorie du monde social* (Paris: Michel, 1999), p. 100: 'La sociologie de la littérature [...] n'ignore donc pas les textes, mais elle invite à les considérer autrement, non pas comme des choses déjà

If this is so, however, if indeed these two manuscripts induct the reader, imaginatively, into the sort of exclusive society that we met with the *Cour amoureuse*, with *Le Pastoralet*, and with *Le Parfait du Paon*, then they do so only rudimentarily. In the chapter that follows, I propose to turn to a much more elaborate and interesting manuscript which is more identifiably the record of a particular sort of cultural transaction: one where much more is known about the 'event', the social circumstances of its production, and where that 'event' has given birth to poems of a very different order: one where poetry is recognizably a collective phenomenon, where the 'poets' who participate in the social field of poetry construct themselves, as Bourdieu would have it, relationally and where the dynamism of their relationship underpins the word on the page. I turn, in other words, to one of the most famous manuscripts of the French fifteenth century, Charles d'Orléans' personal manuscript, BNF fr. 25458.

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faites (*opus operatum*), des oeuvres demandant à être déchiffrées dans leur vérité ultime, mais plutôt comme les traces objectivées de gestes (*modus operandi*) qui en sont relativement distincts et qui, n'étant pas transparents, sont à réactiver par le détour d'un ensemble systématique d'interrogations et d'hypothèses'.